914.79
Gol/Cau
38267

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 02 July, 2018

THE

32448

CAUCASUS.

38267

IVAN GOLOVIN.

LONDON:

TRÜBNER, & Co., 12, PATERNOSTER ROW;

T. F. A. DAY, 13, CAREY STREET.

1854.

To the Memory

OF

ALEXANDER BESTOUJEF,

THE DISTINGUISHED WARRIOR-AUTHOR

AND THE GREAT EXILE,

WITH THE MOST PROFOUND VENERATION,

THIS WORK IS DEDICATED,

THE AUTHOR.

CONTENTS.

PREFACE.

PAGE

Progress of the Russians—Interest connected with the Caucasus—Prediction—A Chief wanted—The Russians could not stop in their Conquests. 7

CHAPTER I.

England with regard to the Caucasus—Refutation of erroneous arguments—Plundering Habits of the Circassians—The East Indies—Misdeeds of the Russian Domination—The Alcoutes—The Kirguises—Slavery in the Caucasus—The Selling of Women—Turkish Harems. 13

CHAPTER II.

THE PROPHETS OF THE CAUCASUS.

Mansur Bey—The Novel of Spencer—Mansur's true Name—His attempts against Kisliar and Naour—His activity in the Western Caucasus—His End—Khasi Moullah—His Exterior—His Education—The Siege of Tarki—Colonel Mikdashewiski—Siege of Derband—The Russians seize upon several Aouls—Incursions of Khasi-Moullah to Kislair—Tchoumkessen—The taking of Hemry—Death of Khasi—Shamyl Bey—His Portrait—His Evasions—His Administration, and Expedition in Kabardah. . . 24

PAGE

CHAPTER III.

An Equestrial Excursion on the side of the Caspian Sea, by Bestoujef—Ferrerolle to the Caspian. 39

CHAPTER IV.

MENATE.

Y.....viva mi serrana
Con su pe' andaluz;
Ella ci mi soberana,
Mi vida y mi cruz.....
Sus ojos son veneno
Su mirar mi luz..... 63

CHAPTER V.

DESCRIPTION OF THE COUNTRY.

Caucasus—Elbrous—Kasbek—Confusion concerning that Name—Ascensions—Veneration of the Mountains among the Ossetians—Paitigorsk—Composition of the Chain—Passages—The Black and Caspian Seas—The Rivers of the Caucasus—Kouban—Terek—Kour—Rhion—Koissou—Their tributary Streams—Want of Lakes. 73

CHAPTER VI.

ETHNOGRAPHY.

Population—Circassian Race, its beauty—Adighe—Manners—Lesghians—Tchotchenes—Abhases—Ossetians—Alans.—Souanes—Ingoushes—Kabardians—Georgians, their mode of life—Immeretians, their costume, libations and dancing—Mingrelians—Princes Dadiani—Armonians, their qualities—Tartars, their language—Koumikes—Cossacks, development of their Colonies or *Stanitzas*—Colonies of Kars, of Madjar, of Vladimiroyka. 79

PAGE

CHAPTER VII.

EXPLORATION OF THE CAUCASUS.

The March of the Ark—Prometheus—The Amazons of Herodotus—Expedition of the Argonauts—That of Alexander the Great—Mithridates—Strabo—Byzantius—Arabian Authors and their Knowledge of the Caucasus—Russian Princes—Invasions of the Mongols—Gengis-khan—Timour—Missionaries—Genves Works on the Caucasus. 93

CHAPTER VIII.

PRODUCTIONS OF THE CAUCASUS.

Mineral Kingdom — Vegetable Kingdom — Animal Kingdom — Climate—Industry of the Inhabitants. 105

CHAPTER IX.

THE TOWNS OF THE CAUCASUS.

Tiflis—Gori—Kutais—Redout-Kalé—Souchoum-Kalé—Anapa — Erivan—Stavropol—Bakou—Derbend—Kouba. 112

CHAPTER X.

Ruins and Convents—Disastrous Climates—Mortality in the Russian Garrisons—The Means to Prevent it—The Temple of Pitzunder—Mzketha—Upletichoi—The Convent of the Capuchins at Kutaio. 121

CHAPTER XI.

PROGRESS AND REVERSES OF THE RUSSIANS.

Tmoutorakan—Tjumen —Acquisition of Imerétia — Peter's I — Catherine's Conquests—Union of Georgia —Zizianof —Termolof—Rosen—Golovin—Neidhard—Prince Woronzof—Late Events. 125

CHAPTER XII.

PAGE

Marches—Difficulties for the Russian Army—Encampments—Manners of the Soldiers and Officers—Razzias—Arms of the Circassians—Treatment of Prisoners—Degraded Officers—Deserters—Kouznetzoff—Retreats of the Russians—War in the Caucasus endless 145

CHAPTER XIII.

DAGHESTAN.

Limits — Inhabitants — The Lesghians of Avaria — Saklis — Gardens — Women — Marriages — Mills — Bridges — The Parcelling of the Land — Suphism—Retaliation. 159

CHAPTER XIV.

RUSSIAN ARMENIA.

The different Names of the Armenians—Their Origin—Conquest of Cyrus — Introduction of Christianity—Schism—Extinction of the Kings—Domination of the Russians—Sardar Houstein—Emigration—The Patriarch of Echmiadzin—Insurrection at Erivan in 1846—The Armenian Language—Ararat—Lakes—Climate 167

CHAPTER XV.

FACTS AND FICTIONS.

Prisoners—Taganof—Cossack Ivan—Kourinski Soldier—The Prisoner of the Caucasus—by the Count X. de Maistre—by the Author—by Pouskine—Brigands—Abdoulah-Bey—The grateful Mullah — Lermontof—Ismael-Bey. 173

Ah! curst be thy soil, thou false country of slaves,
For thy prophets have in thee no homes but their graves.

A NEW Prometheus, *he* also was bound to the rocks of the Caucasus, by the northern Jupiter; and the stern necessity, which compelled him to fight against the independence of the Circassians, was the Russian eagle that devoured his heart. But the god of the Russians never allowed any Hercules to come and deliver him. His deliverance was the work of a Circassian ball. Thus fell the man who for ever shall live in the memory of all generous Russians.

He was even forbidden to bear his own name, and he was called Marlinski; but his grateful countrymen will remember both the revolutionist and the author, and will easily associate the two names.

While in the Caucasus, he was doomed to drag himself along with a musket; but even this was

a great boon for him, who had returned from cold Siberia, from the mines, and compulsory labour.

Now, what was his crime? He had courageously attempted to seize upon the Czar's thunderbolt, and to break the chains of his countrymen. He had robed the light which shone on the iniquities of the Czar's counsellors.

Indeed, he of whom Mickiewicz said—

"That hand which Bestoujef held out to me, had been torn from his sword and pen, and had been attached by the Czar to the convict's cart"—

He of whom Schamisso said—

"Ich bin Bestuscheff, den viele Zungen
Ryleiffs Mitverschworenen genannt,
Dem er sein hohes Schwanenlied gesungen"—

The man who had excited universal admiration—has certainly no need of a monument raised by my feeble hands; therefore my only purpose is to adorn my book with *his* name; with a name illustrious in the annals of the exiles; with the name of the author to whom the Caucasus owes the description of its finest regions.

London, June, 1853.

PREFACE.

Progress of the Russians — Interest connected with the Caucasus — Prediction — A Chief wanted — The Russians cannot stop in their Conquests.

Russia has, silently and unperceived by Europe, extended her power in the East. Whilst the English were only discovering Archangel, the Czar Ivan made the conquest of Astrakhan. Louis XIV., by calling the Russian Czar prince of Cabadin, was not aware that he mutilated the word Kabardah. Peter I. settled on the Caspian Sea, with the view of opening a road to India, long before England began to suspect the strength of the Russian Colossus. In fact, the designs of that monarch are fully revealed by his will, by which he urges his descendants to aim at the conquest of the world.

Nevertheless, it is doubtful whether Catherine II. would have been able to seize upon the Crimea, had she not been supported by Joseph II., and by the hatred which then existed in Europe against the Mussulmans. It was only after the partition of Poland that the European powers began to see clearly into the designs of Russia. Louis XV. was heard to say, "That he would have given his last carriage to prevent the accomplishment of that iniquity." But France was too far removed from Russia, and so she was in 1830.

The press has nobly acted its part, and has eloquently called the serious attention of the European powers to the slow and ominous conquest of the Caucasus by Russia. But the English government, disregarding the warning of enlightened politicians, has recognised the right of Russia to blockade the eastern coast of the Black Sea.

The conquest of Circassia will therefore be accomplished, but it will be a hard task for Russia to maintain under her subjection the valorous mountaineers of that region. Moreover, she will then have, at the two extremities of her

empire, two gnawing worms—Poland and the Caucasus.

There are but few countries where nature has displayed so much poetry as in the Caucasus. Its general surface has something more strikingly beautiful than that of the Alps; and its inhabitants are justly celebrated for their beauty and picturesque costume.

It is now the theatre of events, interesting in the highest degree. It is a noble duty to record the heroic deeds of populations which magnificently teach all oppressed nations how to fight and struggle for national independence. Faith, it is true, fires the heart of the Circassians, and their fanaticism supplies military tactics but their courage is not the less worthy of our admiration.

According to a Circassian tradition, a powerful sultan is to rise in the west, and to humble the padishah of Moscow; but, if a Turkish tradition is to be credited, the Ottoman empire is to be overthrown by a northern power. Are these two predictions to be accomplished, or neither?

Unfortunately the Circassians differ with regard to the form of their political government. Whilst those of the west have always had a chief, under the banners of whom they march against the Russians, the Circassians of the east have preferred a democratic government. The latter are under the impression that Russia cannot bribe several leaders watching one another closely. But events, as it will be seen, show that their notions are erroneous.

In fact, Shamyl is as inaccessible to corruption as Khasi-Moullah. Moreover, the number of his followers is perpetually increasing, as they confide in his wisdom and valour.

The populations of the Black Sea, on the contrary, being deprived of a general leader to direct the various movements, take arms unseasonably, and without unity of purpose.

Already their beys fraternise with the Russian chiefs, and their ouzdines with the officers.

The Circassians of the east visit the Russian forts, to effect there, peaceably, the exchange of their productions; and as the promises held out

to them that an English fleet was destined to deliver them have proved to be deceptive, the intercourse between the two contending parties has, on that account, become yet more frequent. Moreover, as the beys, Dshighetes and Oubiches, are favourably treated by the Russian generals, among whom we shall mention Mouraief and Ivan Bey, who is himself a Dshighete by birth, they naturally feel more and more well-disposed towards Russia. No one can doubt that the Russians will ably take advantage of the favourable dispositions of their neighbours of the Black Sea.

The Russians are carried onward. Will they stop on the road to conquest? The taking of Trebisond presents indeed more difficulty by land than by sea, as the road which leads from Erzeroum to that city is rendered toilsome and dangerous by several defiles that are to be crossed.

The Pachalik of Kars would even prove to be a more useful acquisition for them. The climate of that territory is decidedly more favourable to a Russian garrison than that of Georgia.

On the side of Persia, Russia has not, as it is pretended, more land than she requires; since, at this very moment, the Czar is willing to accept a province for the arrears of the contributions that are due to him.

THE CAUCASUS.

CHAPTER I.

POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS.

England with regard to the Caucasus—Refutation of Erroneous Arguments—Plundering habits of the Circassians—The East Indies—Misdeeds of the Russian domination — The Aleoutes — The Kirguises — Slavery in the Caucasus—The Selling of Women —Turkish Harems.

An enemy to war, and a friend to the independence of every nation, I have blamed,* and I still disapprove, the war in the Caucasus; but I must state that the arguments which in England are brought forward against it, have no weight in the estimation of those who are conversant with the question, and who have impartially examined it under its different aspects.

Since the taking of the Vixen, in 1837, the most strange paradoxes have circulated concerning that war, and have confused the ideas of the public.

"Turkey," it is said, "had no right to yield to Russia the eastern coast of the Black Sea, as she did by her treaty in 1829. The Sultan had over the Circassians no other right than that of a head of the Mussulman church, and he could not dispose of a province which did not belong to him."

* Russia, under Nicholas I., chapter on the Caucasus.

But the Turks had garrisons at Anapa, Suhum-Kale, and though not the suzerains of Circassia, yet they were its protectors. They therefore had a right to abandon the sea-shore to Russia, since they had exercised, in the interior of the country, a power more or less extended according to circumstances. By anterior treaties, and already in the time of Catherine II., both powers had made different stipulations concerning the fate of the different parts of Circassia, of Kabardah and other provinces.

The Persians, who, on their side, occupied that part of the Caucasus which joins the Caspian Sea, have also, at different times, disposed, in favour of Russia, of that region, the possession of which was more or less questionable.

By the treaty of Gulistan, concluded in 1813, under the mediation of England, the Shah gave up all his pretensions on Daghestan and other parts of the Caucasus.

The war which the Russians carry on against the Circassians is neither more nor less just than that of the French against the Arabs, and that of the English against the Caffres.

Are they wrong in calling the Circassians plunderers? The plundering habits of the mountaineers cannot be questioned. From time immemorial those tribes have lived through the plundering carried on in the territory of their neighbours. They make them a sort of storehouse, and also a constant mean of subsistence.

Moreover, when the harvest does not afford them sufficient means, the Circassians seize upon children, and sell them for slaves. Their incursions on the Russian territory, for ever renewed, have always been attended with unbearable excess. They carry away with them not only the cattle, but also the inhabitants, whom they make their

slaves, without distinction of sex or age, and whom they restore for a ransom, which is one of the principal objects of their expeditions. It is not unusual with them to drag into the mountains the wives of the Cossacks, of Russian merchants, or of military men, and to ravage whole stanitzas (Cossacks' hamlets).

The Tcherkesses resort, indeed, to harsh measures towards their Russian prisoners, and far from behaving well towards them, they invariably load them with chains, and make them work in the fields, like beasts of burden. Would a better treatment obtain better results?

The Russians are naturally led to retaliate; and in the attempt to put an end to those nefarious acts against property and personal liberty, war has become permanent.

The English fear, justly, that the Russian war in the Caucasus may one day threaten their possessions in the East Indies. The Russians have already steam-boats on the lake Achal; and their disastrous expeditions against Chiva and Bukhara will be no more renewed. Just now the General Pezowsky has evacuated a Chivan fortress, and the Khan of Chowa has declared a wish to maintain the best relations with the Czar.

Persia is little more than a Russian province; and one cannot help smiling on hearing Klaproth say that the Russians could, at the utmost, only threaten Hindostan; but Lahore, the Peru of precious stones, is a rich and easy prey; and the Sikhs, trained to war by the French, would become invincible, were they supported by the Russians.

A Russian army, declaring that its wish is not to subdue the Indies, but to deliver them from English domination, would probably see as many as 200,000 natives come and flock under its standards, led by their different nabobs.

Tartary, that nursery of invaders, which extends from the Caspian Sea to China, and which overflows with inhabitants, might, if aroused by Russia, in a year of scarce pasturage, throw masses of warriors into India. How could the Bengal army resist such an invasion?

The English do not relish the notion of one day having the Russians for their neighbours. But is it in their power to prevent it?

The world will, no doubt, for a certain length of time, continue to be an object of contention between absolutism and liberty, whose struggles are alone worthy of being recorded by history. But how can liberty expect to achieve a final triumph, if it recoils from a contact with its adversary? The English, it is true, are not sufficiently numerous in the East Indies; but they are sufficiently rich to maintain efficient armies there. Let the English resolutely declare themselves the generous defenders of liberty, and their moral influence will overwhelm the brutal force of the Russian empire.

Mr. Urquhart* considers the Caucasus the shortest road to India; but I do not consider it the most convenient. Besides, there is no reason why the Indian mail should not pass through Poti and Tiflis.

Now, it is but justice to Russia, to state that she has rendered roads safe which were infested by robbers, notwithstanding the contributions which the chiefs of different tribes raised upon travellers.

I could not help smiling, while perusing a few pages of *Spencer*,† in which the author dwells, with delight, on the productions of the Caucasus, and speaks with a certain

* The Mystery of the Danube.

† Travels in the Western Caucasus, vol. I.

longing of the spacious ports; of the seas abounding with fish; and of the safe anchorage on the Euxine Sea.

It is easy to perceive that Mr. Spencer would, with satisfaction, like to see that country come into the possession of his countrymen.

Such a feeling may be praiseworthy; but the Circassians mistrust the English, who, they fancy, are attracted by their gold, and whom they would not like to see settled in their territory.

But is, after all, English domination, in the East Indies, so much to be admired? Has torture entirely disappeared? What efficient means have been resorted to, in order to elevate the moral and physical qualities of the Indian? Widows, it is true, are no longer allowed to burn themselves alive with the corpses of their husbands. The Thugs, a detestable sect of assassins, are put down everywhere, and roads have been opened. Yet the natives have many inducements which lead them to prefer the government of their own princes to that of England.

In order that our appreciation of English writers may not be ascribed to Russian patriotism, which we have relinquished in favour of English freedom, considered as distinct from British domination in foreign countries, we shall bring forward, on a point which we have not yet touched, the authority of the German traveller, Moritz Wagner.

"Great mistrust," he says, "is to be entertained while perusing the works of the English writers, who, such as Bell and Urquhart, have, it is true, personally known the Tcherkesses; but who, through party-spirit, have, as much as they could, interpreted, in favour of the Circassians, what they have seen and heard, and have prudently omitted many things unfavourable to them.*

* Der Kaukasus, vol. II., p. 49, first edition.

Corruption is no doubt an arm which Russia handles with uncommon skill, and especially through it she has smoothed her way to the Caucasus. Russian brandy has, in spite of the Coran and Shamyl, carried havoc amongst the Lesghis. Russian coin is much sought after by all the different tribes, and especially the silver roubles, which have replaced the linen, the cattle, and the salt, which formerly served as means of exchange. The epaulettes also have excited the ambition of several Circassian princes and nobles. The seductions of civilisation penetrate to places which had been inaccessible to Russian bayonets.

Nevertheless, hatred to the Russians is powerful everywhere; and religious fanaticism is powerfully fanned by the sect of the Murides.

We must add also that Russian agents discredit by their dishonesty the influence of their government, and they do so, even in spite of the numerous persons dismissed from the service by prince Vorontzof, who, it must be admitted, is one of the most distinguished men of Russia.

Now, if we are anxious to ascertain what kind of happiness the Circassians have to expect under the Russian yoke, let us examine the condition of the populations which enjoy the benefit of Russian domination.

Let us, take for instance, the *Russo-American Company*, which is placed under the special protection of the emperor, and which is invested with the monopoly of every kind of industry, and with an independent administration.

Well, that company, disregarding its true interest, has so well imitated the oppressive spirit of the government, that it has reduced the Aleoutes to the last stage of misery.

Forty years ago, the governor, Baronoff, in order to try rifles, used to place twelve Aleoutes by the side of one

another, and order his soldiers to fire on them, in order to ascertain through how many heads a ball would go.

Such a pastime is now out of fashion, because the Aleoutes are too scarce. Indeed, their islands have been so brutally devastated, that the population of the island of Kadiak, which amounted to 10,000, is now reduced to 500.

But is despotism intelligent because it is all-powerful? The natives have been compelled to follow the different Russian callings, and to abandon fishing for the chase; so, being no longer allowed to procure fish for their food, they have gradually perished through starvation. But do they not derive a profit from the chase? There is penalty of death against any Aleoute who should sell a beast to a stranger. All the beasts are to be taken by the Aleoute to the *magazin*, and the company pays twenty-five roubles for a castor, which is sold for 1,500 roubles at St. Petersburg.

A merchant, who had just passed a considerable time among the Kirguises, and could not sufficiently praise their chivalrous spirit, and poetic kind of life, said to us lately:—

"The Russian government has found the means of exercising its spirit of mischievous cunning even against that new-made tribe. It has taken it into its head to limit the extent of the territory within which the Kirguises are allowed to wander; and yet, God knows, it is rich in deserts."

Slavery in Little Russia is a gift of the Russian government; and the privileges of the Polish provinces have been abolished. The present emperor has even carried his ingenuity so far as to introduce the censorship amongst the Cossacks, to curtail the national songs they have been singing for ages, and purge new editions of liberal allusions, which, nevertheless, will continue to live in the memory of those children of liberty.

Schools have been established in the Caucasus; but the Circassians could do very well without being able to read the Russian language.

Russia is half an ape and half a bear. She apes Europe in foreign kingdoms, but at home her bear's paw is felt everywhere.

"The Russian Government," said another traveller, "reigns like a bear in a forest, who breaks trees merely for the sake of breaking them." In fact, it blindly crushes every germ of development. If you rub off the surface of the ape, you will find the bear underneath.

Now, with regard to the Circassians, we find that their contact with the Russians, far from having a tendency to diminish slavery in the Caucasus, has given it an aspect still more repulsive.

As we might be accused of exaggeration, we shall quote, on this subject, the words of a German traveller, who was so much touched with the attention paid to him by the Russian authorities, who had given him a government passport, and special escorts, that on his return to this country, he increased the number of the admirers of Russia. M. Koch says:*

"Circassian princes and nobles learned, through a more intimate acquaintance with Russian lords, that the lower classes in Russia were slaves. Being cunning, they immediately availed themselves of that knowledge, and not only took formal possession of the soil, but also pretended that they had a right of property in the common Circassian who had settled on their domains.

"At the time when the right of property was settled in Transcaucasia, many of them, and chiefly the Georgians, who then were in direct connection with the Russian govern-

* Reise durchs Russland nach dem Kaukasschen Isthmus, tom I. p. 352.

ment, knew how to derive great advantages from that circumstance. In fact, several who did not belong to princely families succeeded in appropriating that title to themselves. By that means they became lords, over subjects who had previously held them, in some measure, under their dependence.

"Bondage, which formerly had never existed in the Caucasus, unfortunately now prevails there. Thus Russia may believe that she has enriched the princes of the land at the expense of the people, and has secured the devotion of the former; but she has lost the sympathy of the common population."

This is positively true, as being particularly applied to Kabardah, which, nevertheless, enjoyed the protection of Russian agents, of German origin.

But we will add another fact, which gives but a poor opinion of the Russian goverment.

In 1826, the German colonists of the Transcaucasus, were carried away into slavery by the Kurdes; and it was only through subscriptions in Germany and Switzerland, that they were ransomed. The government never thought of them, when it made peace with Persia.

The *Russian Invalid* (a periodical) of the 7th of August, 1840, stigmatised the slave-trade as shameful; and said, "that the Russian forts had been specially erected with a view to oppose it;" this generous language was held under the administration of General Golovin.

Well, five years after, Count Vorontzof, by an act made public in 1845, re-established the slave trade. It was through that shameful concession to the Circassians, he inaugurated his coming to the Caucasus.

That measure found, of course, supporters, as every bad cause always did.

According to those gentlemen, "the slave-trade is indispensable to the existence of the mountaineers, and the daughters of the Caucasus are too happy to dwell in the harems of Constantinople, as in fact, the sisters and mothers of the Sultans are Circassian women; being brought up in the religion of Mahomet, their fate would not be different if they remained in their own country; besides, can they grieve for parents who sold them?"

The supporters of the slave-trade are not, it must be admitted, scrupulous about principles. But what would they answer if we told them that life in harems is not so happy as they are pleased to say? Have they not witnessed, in the market of Constantinople, young girls crying and deploring their fate, while following their buyers? Does not the Bosphorus receive women sewn alive in sacks, because their faithfulness is merely suspected, or because they are accused by more fortunate rivals?

Favourites and eunuchs embitter the life of others; and the sultana herself is doomed to see her younger male children put to death, in order that they should not become pretenders to the throne.

The slave-trade was sanctioned by a treaty of 1847, between the Russians and the Circassians. During part of the year it is carried on openly on the Black Sea.

Every year more than 1,000 young girls are carried from Circassia to Turkey; and the obstacles opposed to that trade have had no other result than to quadruple the price of slaves. Even Austrian steam boats are employed for carrying Circassian girls; and whenever the Russians capture any of these slave-boats, they either give the girls in marriage to the Cossacks, or they allow them to be violated by the soldiers of the regiments garrisoned in the neighbouring forts.

The slave-market of Constantinople, removed out of the town, is now of difficult access to foreigners; but the Circassians form a separate colony, and enjoy many privileges. We will borrow, from a recent work, a picturesque description of that slave-trade *.

* Bayle St. John's "The Turks in Europe."—"Another source from which vacant harems are filled is the market of Georgian slaves; but it is by no means so popular. These unhappy creatures, who are embarked at Trebisond on board of the regular steamers, reach Constantinople in a very sad and pitiable state. We can imagine an European reader almost envying the captain under whose care is placed so poetical a cargo; but, alas! the truth is, that the Georgians are looked upon almost as suspiciously as a hundred cases of leeches for the Marseilles market. It is true they are separated as much as possible from the rest of the passengers, penned in like a flock of sheep, hidden by dirty clothes; or, in bad weather, crammed below like negroes in the middle passage. In spite of these precautions, the whole vessel suffers from their presence. Nearly every one of them has the itch; and, without exception, every one brings away a colony of native vermin. This is easily accounted for. The poor things resemble not a bevy of English maidens going out voluntarily to seek for husbands in the barracks of Madras or Calcutta. They are sold from poverty or avarice by their parents or friends, and are handed over nearly naked to the purchaser. To dress them would eat up all the profits. A ragged shift and piece of canvas wrapped round their shoulders—such is the costume in which they crowd by day and huddle together at night, whispering or dreaming of the splendour which has been promised them, to dispel their sorrow or their sulkiness,—and perhaps giving a passing thought to the home which has cast them forth, like the pet lamb when it has outgrown the fondness or the patience of its mistress. The merchant, with the uncalculating stupidity which characterises all dealers in human flesh, fattens these future sultanas during the voyage on water and millet-flour porridge. They arrive at their journey's end in such a state that few connoisseurs in incipient beauty would venture to pronounce an opinion. Sometimes, when the owner is in haste to realise, he drives his Georgian flock to market in the unseemly condition in which they come ashore; or at most throws around them a ferigeh—the mantle of the Turkish women. Chance for the most part presides over the sale. The purchaser keeps at a respectful distance from his acquisition, as a doctor might from a plague patient; and drives her before him to what may be called a preparatory school for the harem. A number of old women, indeed, gain their living by polishing up this rough material; curing them, by remedies of which they have the secret, of their disease, combing their hair into shape, scrubbing them, and exterminating the reminiscences they have brought with them from their native hovels."

CHAPTER II.

THE PROPHETS OF THE CAUCASUS.

Mansur Bey—The Novel of Spencer—Mansur's true Name—His attempts against Kisliar and Naour—His activity in the Western Caucasus—His End.—*Khasi Moullah*—His Exterior—His Education—The Siege of Tarki—Colonel Miklashewiski—Siege of Derband—The Russians seize upon several Aouls—Incursions of Khasi Moullah to Kisliar—Tchoumkessen—The Taking of Hemry—Death of Khasi—Shamyl Bey—His Portrait—His Evasions—His Administration, and Expedition in Kabardah.

MANSUR BEY.

If there be in literature a path beset with toil often unrewarded, that path is, undoubtedly, the one followed by writers of historical novels; for readers, prejudiced before hand against the truth of the events that are narrated, do not know how to distinguish reality from fiction. So, unless an author is gifted with the genius of Walter Scott, with his extensive knowledge and his accuracy in the most minute descriptions, he will seldom obtain, in that path of literature, the success he expected; yet a historical novel is well adapted to public taste, and, moreover, offers a practical interest.

History, by offering statements which are often incomplete, is not calculated to gratify entirely the curiosity of every class of reade[redacted] It, therefore, must be admitted that a novel which su[redacted]es historical deficiency, develops

characters, shows the secret springs through which men are set in motion, and adorns facts, without presenting them under a contradictory light, is a work of unquestionable merit.

Besides, history itself has often a romantic appearance. In Eastern, or but very little civilised countries, where written history does not exist, or if it does, is almost unknown, traditions are filled with fables, and it is difficult to separate tares from wheat, and gold from foreign ingredients. Moreover, a narrative is, in the estimation of many, so much the more attractive, as it is more marvellous. In no country is that tendency of the human mind so visible as in the Caucasus, where oral relations are embellished, as they pass from mouth to mouth; and so much so that they bewilder any one who would attempt to discern reality from fiction.

Ellja Mansur is, above all, one of those men, about whom the most extraordinary reports are circulated. To collect and group them artistically was an undertaking which could not fail to please the fancy of an author. It is what Mr. Spencer has done in his novel, entitled "The Prophet of the Caucasus and Prince Potemkin." But he has thought fit to place the scene in Crimea. However, taken all in all, his work deserved more success; for in it situations are interesting; events full of attraction; and if we meet, here and there, unfair caricatures—as that of Souvoroff—the character of Girei, Khan of Crimea, and that of the Prophet, are skilfully traced out.

Nevertheless, the author might have drawn more advantage than he has done, from the supposition that Mansur Bey was the son of a king of Poland.

Taking history for our guide, we know that the name of

Sheik Mansur was at first *Dervish Mohammed*, and that Daghestan was his primitive field of action. It was at the head of an army of Lesghians and Tchetchenians that he attacked Kisliar, where he experienced a complete check; he was not more successful at *Navur*, where Cossack women fought by the side of their husbands.

Mansur Bey was the first who seriously set to work for the purpose of bringing together the different tribes of Pont-Euxine, in order that the Russians might be more sucessfully resisted. His preaching of the Koran was attended with so much success that he converted the *Ubikhian* and *Daghestan* princes and nobles, who, since that time, have professed the Mussulman religion.

He was, in 1791, taken prisoner by the Russians, at the assault of Anapa. He was conducted to the convent of *Solovetzki*, on the shore of the Black Sea, where he soon ended his days in captivity and grief.

Mansur Bey was a frugal and learned man; qualities which, no doubt, added to the prestige of his name, which still lives in the memory of the mountaineers. He has had several imitators and successors in his holy mission; but neither *Guz-bey* nor *Dschimbulat* rose to the high reputation which he had obtained; and we therefore do not think it fit to enter into any details concerning the deeds of these last two personages.

II.—KHASI-MOULLAH.

Khasi-Moullah was a man of a short stature, with small eyes and a thin beard; and the small pox had left traces on his countenance. He was brought up by the Moullah of the Aoul Berekei, in Koissouboula. That chief having

discovered in the young man an uncommon capacity, sent him to Kadi-Mohamed, in the domains of Aslan-Khan: but, in 1821, that Khan expelled from his country both the master and the pupil; thereupon Khasi became a travelling clerk,—an occupation which gave him an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the nature of the country which he was later destined to make resound with the report of his exploits.

Not long after, in 1830, he was seen surrounded with boor Murids, whom he had trained. With that small band he openly declared war against the Russians. *Naurous Bey*, who was detained prisoner at Derband, found out the means of escaping from that town, and went to join him as a partisan. Khasi-Moullah, different from other chiefs, did not himself make use of arms; and he did not fight, but excited the believers to fight bravely.

At that period Paskiewitch had just departed to wage war against the Poles, and had been, *ad interim*, succeeded by General Parkratief; thereupon the Prophet presented himself, with an army of Lesghians and Tchetchenians, before Tarki. The fortress of that town, called *Bournaia*—that is, the *stormy*—was commanded by Major Fedassyseff, and had only a weak garrison. If Khasi-Moullah had attacked it on the side of the mountains, he, undoubtedly, would have taken it: but he confined himself to besiege the town, which extends more towards the east. He had two important results in view; the first was, to take possession of the springs, which alone supplied the town with water, and to seize upon the powder magazine, which was in the neighbourhood.

He fully succeeded in his undertaking; but, at the moment the mountaineers entered the magazine, a grenade,

thrown in it from the fort, caused it to explode, and a great number of Circassians were killed by the explosion.

In the meanwhile the garrison made frequent and terrible sallies; but it suffered dreadfully from thirst, and appeared to have no other resource left but to bury itself under the ruins of the fort. In that emergency, a Tartar promised to carry, to General Kochanoff, the news of the distress of Tarki. He leaped down from the wall: the Russians fired at him, and he, in his turn, fired at them; through that stratagem he was considered a deserter, and allowed to proceed on his journey. A few days afterwards, General Kochanoff received, in the barrel of a gun, a note, stating the desperate position of Bouinvia. He flew to its assistance; and the joy of the garrison was great indeed, when it heard the roaring of the Russian cannon. The fight was terrible, and lasted for two days; but, on the 30th of May, Khasi-Moullah raised the siege. He went to excite Tabasseran to revolt. Colonel Mikhlachewski was charged to put him down. He succeeded in a brilliant campaign which lasted only a fortnight, and in which he acquired the denomination of the Black Colonel,—a denomination which the mountaineers gave him out of the terror with which he inspired them. At the same time they changed Khasi-Moullah into *Tasi*-Moullah, that is, *dog*, to express the sufferings he drew upon them.

Nevertheless, on the 19th of August, Khasi-Moullah dared to lay the siege before Derband,—a powerful town in which he had some accomplices. But Major *Wasselroff*, the commander of the fort, which was called Narynkale, knew so well how to revive the courage of the inhabitants, that the Tartars came to ask him for arms, and, in fact, assisted the Russians in their different sallies.

There then ensued a dreadful fight, in which the Russians, though inferior in number, remained victorious. All the stratagems of Khasi-Moullah had now rather the effect of lowering him in the estimation of the population: finally, on the 27th of August, having heard of the approach of General Kochanoff, he raised the siege and fled to the mountains.

The Russians, to be revenged of those two sieges, took the aouls Dúweck, Madschalis, Erpeli, and Tcherkey, from which they carried off immense booty; for the Lesghians had concealed there their riches, believing they would be safe. Moreover, at the taking of Hermentchoux, another populous aoul, the Moullah-Abdurachman, one of Khasi-Moullah's captains, was burned alive in a tower, with about fifty Murids.

Nevertheless, all those checks did not prevent Khasi-Moullah from falling unexpectedly, the 1st of November, on the town of Kisliar, and in broad day. He carried off considerable booty, especially by levying a tax on the Armenian merchants.

On the 2nd of December, the Russians attacked the aoul Tchoum Kesun. Colonel Mikhlachewski was killed in that attack; but, before expiring, he said to his soldiers, "take it;" and the soldiers took possession of the aoul, and put the inhabitants to the edge of the sword.

On the 17th of October, 1832, General Rosen, having crossed the defile of Hemry, though the mountaineers pretended that it was insuperable unless it rained, attacked the aoul of the same name. The volunteers of the regiment of Sappers carried the last tower at the point of the bayonet, and threw down, among other corpses, that of Khasi-Moullah. He received death while holding his beard with his left hand, and raising his right fist to heaven.

III.—SHAMYL.

Shamyl is now 56 years old; he is fair, with grey eyes, and a regular nose. He is a middle-sized man, and his constitution is rather delicate, though he has, from his youth, endeavoured to strengthen it by exercise. As well as his actual antagonist, Prince Vorontzof, he suffers from pain in his eyes: his hands, his feet, and his mouth are small, and the colour of his skin is more white than that of his countrymen. But now his beard is grey.

Shamyl is a Lesghian by birth, and he was born in 1797, in the aoul of Hemry. His knowledge of the tongue, of the literature and of the philosophy of the Arabs, is very extensive. He is indebted for his superior learning to Moullah *Dshelal-eddin*, whom he has always treated with great veneration, and who contributed much to raise him to power.

Ambition, dissimulation, and the calm which fits the prophet as well as the chief, are the distinctive features of his character.

He considers himself as the arm of Providence; and the Murides believe that he is inspired. The wonderful luck with which he has three times escaped a death which was deemed unavoidable, has confirmed the faith of the people in him, and keeps up his own energy.

The first time that he miraculously escaped death was, in 1831, at the storming of Hemry. Khasi-Moullah and many Murids were killed by his side; he was himself wounded with a ball and a thrust of the bayonet: yet he opened a way, disappeared; and two years afterwards the Caucasus resounded with his name.

It has been for a long time pretended that he had been

taken prisoner at Hemry, conducted to Petersburg, made a Russian officer, and sent to fight against his own countrymen; but that, having been offended by his chief, he had passed over to the enemies of Russia. It is even related that afterwards a wounded Russian officer, who had been taken prisoner, was brought to him, and happened to be a friend of his; and that, after a long conversation, Shamyl had restored him to liberty. The pretended conversation has, of course, been reported with all the details which could make it appear interesting.

There is, however, one part which is positively certain: it is the education of his two sons at Petersburg, in a corps of Cadets. But one of them escaped and rejoined his father.

Nevertheless the history, which we have just mentioned, is true, but with this difference, that the hero of it was *Daniel-Bey*, now the friend of Shamyl, and his companion in arms.

Daniel-Bey was, in fact, made a Russian general; and, unwilling to submit to the injustice of one of his chiefs, he deserted, and from Teflis he went to Sclissia, his native country, of which he was sultan, and where he erected the standard of revolt. Thereupon Colonel Belgrad marched against him, and took Sclissia by assault. Daniel escaped, and went to join Shamyl, who appointed him his brigade major.

But let us return to Shamyl.

As it may be easily believed, the preservation of Shamyl's life has also supplied the mountaineers with subjects for miraculous narratives. According to one of those wonderful stories, Shamyl was killed at the storming of Hemry; but Allah gave him a new life, in order that the resurrection of the Murid should show by a visible sign

that he was destined to be the chief of his co-religionists.

It was in 1834 that Shamyl's life was, for the second time, miraculously preserved. The event occurred at *Chunsakh*, under the following circumstances:—

Chunsakh was the residence of the khans of Avaria; and the khaness,* *Pachou Bike*, faithful to the Russians, had, in 1830, repulsed Khasi-Moullah. But afterwards, *Hamsad Bey*, the successor of that prophet, took possession of Chunsakh, but only after he had first traitorously assassinated the two sons of the khaness, who had come to his tent for a parley, and next put their mother to death.

Avengers are not wanting in the land of Daghestan; and the new chief of the Murids was to perish through the hands of his two faithful and distinguished companions in arms, *Ossman* and *Hadshi Mourad*.

These two brothers had been brought up with Omar Khan, the eldest son of the Khaness of Chunsakh. Incited to vengeance by their own father, they killed *Hamsad Bey* in the mosque. Ossman himself perished under the blows of the Murids; but his brother roused the people to insurrection. A great number of Murids were slaughtered in the temple; and those who escaped took refuge in the tower. Shamyl, who had followed Hamsad Bey to the mosque, was among them. They offered a desperate resistance. Thereupon Hadshi Mourad ordered the tower to be set on fire. Only two Murids escaped through the flames: one was the denunciator of the plot, who had sworn on the Koran to keep it secret, and had betrayed Hadshi Mourad. He was taken and burned alive. The other was Shamyl himself, who vanished out of sight.

* Khaness the feminine of khan.

The third escape of Shamyl was not less extraordinary. It occurred in 1839, at the storming of Akhoulgo, where he commanded the garrison. Fifteen hundred Murids were killed while fighting, and the others, to the number of nine hundred, all more or less wounded, were taken prisoners by the Russians. But when the battle was over, Shamyl, who had directed the defence of that castle-redoubt, was found neither among the dead nor among the prisoners. And no one could conceive by what means he could have accomplished his escape.

Shamyl himself never revealed the mystery of his disappearance from Akhoulgo, being anxious to increase the prestige attached to his name, and to make the people believe that a miracle was always ready at hand to preserve his life and liberty. But the Russians, who had no interest in believing that Shamyl had been saved by Divine intervention, pretended that he had concealed himself in some subterranean passage, and had remained there till he found an opportunity of effecting his escape safely.

However, be it as it may, he passed into the country of the Itchkenians, and aroused the aouls to insurrection one after the other. That extraordinary occurrence shows fully the wonderful power of Shamyl's moral influence; for, while the taking of Akhoulgo kept the neighbouring populations in terror, those who were in the rear of the Russians revolted; and ancient servants of Russia sent back their Russian insignia of distinction, in order to side openly with the Iman! Yet the General Grabbe understood so little the importance of that man, that he offered only one hundred ducats for his head.

Shamyl, though an Iman, and the second prophet of Allah, as he is called by his followers, does not consider

himself bound to keep faith with the Russians, "whose eyes express falsehood, and lips tell lies." In this he follows the prescription of his master and predecessor, Khasi-Moullah. He, in 1837, took a solemn oath of faithfulness to the Emperor of Russia, and the oath was received at *Tilitle* by General Zass. But he saw in his oath nothing else but a means through which he could get out of his temporary difficulties, and pave the way to greater advantages.

Shamyl had for a long time a potent rival to his power in the person of *Tashaw-Hadshi*, who, conscious that he could not effectually struggle against his influence, acknowledged his supremacy in 1837.

Religion, union, and violence, are the three springs of Shamyl's power. He has known how to establish unity in religion, to reconcile Ali with Omar, to mingle all sects into a single one, and through faith to keep the different populations united in their common hatred of the "Moscovs." But fear has more share than interest in maintaining the various aouls under his domination; for he chastises traitors and subdues rebels. We should be wrong indeed if we believed that the populations which obey him are pleased with his sway. In fact, he raises regular and irregular contributions in coin, in men and in provisions, which are considered as vexatives. Every tenth man is obliged to rally around his standard, and the others to keep themselves ready to obey the first order, or to encounter the first danger. Every family pays a tax of a silver rouble; and the tenth of the harvest is taken to the storehouses of the chief. Discontent is so great, that Shamyl dares not to appear in public unless surrounded by a numerous escort.

Hamsad Bey was the first who formed a troop of Russian and Polish deserters, among whom there were several officers. Shamyl has improved and increased that troop, which is now composed of 4,000 men of all nations; but his life-guard is formed of 1,000 picked Murids, called *Murtosigats*.

Shamyl draws the best advantage he can from the credulity of the mountaineers. Every time that an important expedition is to be undertaken, he retires into a grotto, where he remains whole weeks fasting and conversing with Allah; and on leaving his retreat he publicly announces the result of his conversations with God.

He has introduced post-houses and couriers on horseback through all Daghestan. He has also imitated the Russians, by instituting decorations, distinctions, and ranks in his army. The chiefs of 100 men, who distinguish themselves by their courage, receive silver round medals; the chiefs of 300, triangular medals; and those of 500, silver epaulets.

Before 1842, sabres of honour were the only distinction bestowed, and they were carried on the right side. Now, the chiefs of 1,000 men have the rank of captain, and those of a larger number are generals. Cowards are marked with a piece of felt fixed on the arm, or on the back.

The most distinguished companions in arms of Shamyl are Akhwerdu-Mahommed, Shwail-Moullah, and Ulubey-Moullah.

Shamyl is eloquent, and is in the highest degree master of that oriental eloquence calculated to fire with enthusiasm Mussulman masses, to face the rhetorical flourishes,

and to blunt the hyperboles which Russian chiefs employ in their proclamations.

Do the Russians say that (they are numerous like the grains of sand,) Shamyl answers that (the Circassians are the waves which will carry away that sand.)

In his proclamation of 1844, to the armed men of the two Kabardas, he said—

"Do not believe that God favours number! God sides with good men, and they are always less numerous than the wicked. Carry your eyes around you, and everywhere you will find the confirmation of what I am telling you. Are there not less roses than ill weeds? Is there not more mire than pearls, more vermin than useful beasts? Is not gold more scarce than common metal? And are we not nobler than gold and roses; than pearls and horses, and all the useful animals taken together? for all the treasures of the earth are transient whilst we have been promised an eternal life.

"But, if there are more ill weeds than roses, are we, instead of extirpating them, to wait until by their growing and increasing they have stifled noble flowers? And if our enemies are more numerous than we are, is it wise to allow them to take us in their nets?

"Do not say: Our enemies have subdued Tcherkey, conquered Akhoulgo, and taken all Avaria! When the thunder strikes a tree, do other trees bend down their heads and fall out of fear of being struck in their turn?

"Oh! you, little in your faith, follow the example given you by the green-wood! Indeed the trees of the forest would have made you ashamed of yourselves, if they had a language and could speak.

"Moreover, when a fruit happens to be gnawed by

worms, do other fruits rot out of fear of being eaten by worms?

"Do not, therefore, be astonished at the infidels increasing so quick, and sending always fresh troops to the field of battle to replace those which we have destroyed.—For, I tell you: A thousand mushrooms and venomous plants grow out of the earth before a single good tree has reached maturity. I am the root of the tree of liberty; my Murids are the trunk, and you are the branches. But do not believe that the rottenness of one branch will cause the decay of all the tree! God will cut off bad branches and throw them into the fire of hell; for he is a good garnerer.

"Come back, therefore, full of repentance, and enlist in the ranks of those who fight for our faith; and you shall obtain my favour, and I will be your protection.

"But, if you continue to believe in the seductions of Christian dogs, and in flax-hair, more than in my exhortations, then I will accomplish what Ghasi Mohammed promised you formerly. My huntings shall invade your aouls, like the gloomy cloud of the storm, in order to obtain through force what you refuse to kindness. Blood will mark my road; terror and devastation will follow me; for what the power of speech cannot accomplish, action must be at hand to perform."

The Kabardians, fearing more the Russians than Shamyl, remained immoveable; and when his lieutenant, *Akhwerdu-Mahoma,* invaded their country with arms, he was killed by a tribe devoted to the Russians. Then Shamyl kept his word, and leaving aside Russian forts, he carried devastation into Kabarda. More than sixty aouls became the prey of the flames; and the Moullah took

away with him a vast booty and a considerable number of prisoners.

Shamyl has attempted to establish a bond of connexion with the Circassians of the Black Sea; he has himself visited those warlike populations, and preached his doctrine among them. But he was unsuccessful; partly, because they speak a different language, and his eloquence had necessarily less effect upon them; and, especially, because they prefer to act independently, and as they are advised by their own interest. In fact, since some time, commercial relations on the Kouban have acquired great extension; and those tribes have become fully aware that they would derive more profit from them, than from excursions in which their loss in men and horses would be superior to their gain in cattle and provisions taken away from the enemy.

Now we have but little to add concerning Shamyl:—

He is sober, eats little, and indulges but a short sleep. His concubines are very few in number, and he has only three legitimate wives; and the one he loves best is an Armenian woman.

CHAPTER III.

AN EQUESTRIAN EXCURSION BY THE SIDE OF THE CASPIAN SEA.—FAREWELL TO THE CASPIAN.

(BY BESTOUJEF.)

I TROTTED swiftly along the coast, and left myself entirely to the will of my impetuous horse. The sparks fly, the dust follows me in clouds; the landscape runs with me; fly, like the wind. How sweet it is to fly with the rapidity of thought; how delightful to escape the measure of time and space! There is rapture in this swiftness,—poetry in this rapid course, when light dazzles our eyes and respiration gets convulsive, like in the estatic moment of love. Velocity is a power: it was a mechanical agency from all time, and has become a moral power with us. Velocity is a power, have I said, and how beautiful is it to know that we are powerful. Speed on, then, my horse, speed on! Thou evadest my bit and my bridle, thou wilt overthrow me. Well, I shall find an animal more ferocious than thou to rule over thee.

And I led the impetuous steed right against the breakers of the Caspian Sea.

Have you ever seen the lightning strike the waves? One single second, and it vanishes; one single moment, and my horse stopped short before the waves, surprised by their roaring and howling. Like the savage horses of the Desert,

the mane streaming in the wind, the waves herd-like, run, bounded, advanced, and retired; and he, he rolled his fiery eyes, black like charcoal, with a distrustful wildness, expanded his smoking nostrils, scented his strange companions, and whenever the water broke foaming against his breast, he shook indignantly the drops off his ears, struck the sand with his hoof, and gnashing his teeth, he was preparing to bite his evanescent aggressor. I smoothed his arcuated neck and he became quiet, and only trembled at times at the contact of the waves which bounded at him. A stormy northerly wind drove with noiseful vigour the waves on the sandy shore, as an eagle pursues a herd of swans. The heavens were grey, the rays of the sun dispersed fan-like through the heaving clouds, and at times lighted a rainbow of pearls above the masses of the waves. I bent my face to this welcome rain, and breathed with expanded chest the air of my native country, and it appeared to me as if I heard amongst them harmonious sounds—the voice of my parents, from whom I had been so long separated,—of friends, all but lost to me; the sound of the nightingales of Volkhov,* the sound of the lulls of the metropolis. It appeared to me as if the air was impregnated with the breath of my beloved one,—the freshness of the snow with the aroma of the flower of my minty country; they breathed upon me the recollections of my youth, and to the appeal of the heart answered all the favourite dreams of the past; they flew towards me like swallows, shone like stars, and sprouted like herbs from the soil. It is you—ardent sensations, brilliant dreams, cheering moments of my innermost being, remnants divine of the time which I had embraced for a moment, and which I

* A river which flows at Novgorod.

have lost for ever! Is it you? I have affectionately longed after you, and awaited you a long time since. All has disappeared. The wind alone whistles, the sea alone moves.

And what is then remembrance but the wind which blows from the past, and plays with the waves of our imagination? Happy he who, be it only for a moment, seizes, as if by flight, these lively recollections, like a swallow resuscitated out of the chains of the winter.

This oblivion was a feast for my heart; it was a delirious sensation encased in a gloomy thought. I enjoyed for the last time the sight of the Caspian—which to-morrow I shall leave for ever. Inhospitable, lonely, and tristy sea! It is still with pain that I leave thee. Thou hast been the faithful companion of my thoughts—the unchanging interpreter of my sentiments. Bitter tears of mine have mixed with thy bitter waves; and often have I refreshed a burning heart in thy boiling waters; and with thee I escaped mankind as well as myself. The sound of thy tempests stifled and silenced the storms of my mind; the human voice humbled itself before that more majestic voice of nature—always the same and eternally changing; a language well known and still incomprehensible. Not so, my beloved sea! at times also I understood thy speech. My mind conversed with thee, as it were, in a magnetic trance. At thy appeal, awoke therein both an echo and a response. Thou breathest to me traditions of times of old; I penetrated thy sacerdotal mysteries; I pierced the wonders of thy abysses; and I could fluently read thy divine hieroglyphics, which thy ebbs trace on the sand of the shore, and thy breakers on the very breast of the rock. Flattering and vain ocean! The same enigma envelops

thy shores. Thou openest, at times, thy bed, but it is the doubt of a tomb—not the sense of a book. Alike to heaven, thou art closed to the eye of experience; like it, thou art not accessible to the ever shifting and often deceiving thought. And yet, man has, with his armed eye, even penetrated to the milky way, and deeply pierced the crust of the earth; but what eye—what soul—has reached the bottom of those abysses? Who could lift thy watery covering? Poor man! thou art condemned to collect shells on the border of the ocean, and to waste uselessly thy wisdom in analysing bits of marine peat or grains of pearl. An immense, eternal Sphinx will devour thee, as soon as thou darest to climb to its summit, without comprehending its language—without unravelling its enigma. Everywhere—always, I have loved the sea. I love its calms, when its deeps, covered like by a mirror, are silent as if full of some divine thought; when the heavens reflect in it and the stars seem to glide on its surface. I love the heaving of its respiration and the pulsation of its life in its young and eternal bosom, which renews and purifies everything. I love its mists, which it sends to our thirsty earth. But, over all, I love passionately the storms and the hurricanes of the sea. I admire them by day, when the sun pierces with its rays the black cloud, and covers, as with a cataract of fire, the groups of waves running over the watery desert—others hurry themselves to enter in the circle of Aurora—they glow, they roar of fright, plunge with inclining heads in the abyss, to put out their inflamed locks; others rival in their race the dolphins, which combine with the form of a seal the swiftness of a swallow; others cast bundles of rainbows against the breast of the intrepid ship, which despises all elements

—the earth whence it has started, the winds which it cleaves, and the waters it tramples upon. It enters into a fierce contest with the mountains of waves—cuts them, breaks them, grinds them, so that it might well be said, that the giants of the water bounding against it with menace, tumble down with a smile and become crushed like the dust which descends from a wheel at full speed! I admire the sea by night, when the pale moon raises its forehead from out the clouds like one dead rising from the grave, and strides voiceless over the heavens, dragging after her on the sea her white shroud. These the waves will raise like the shades of the heroes of Ossian, mailed in black, with locks of white hair on their shoulders, and the stars reflecting on their casques of steel. Furious they run—both batter, unite, tumble one over the other, all lustrous by their armour, until they are crumbled to pieces by other warriors who follow them! And those below—far off—the giants of death, pace along—terrible; a cloud serves them in lieu of a casque, and the sea, white as milk, foams under their feet; yet, one step, and the ship will meet destruction! But Jove thunders—heaven and hell tremble in one sad echo—and, see! the giant is fallen, stricken by the flash of heaven.

I like, oh! sea, thy merciless wrath towards the rocky shores, which prevent thee from subduing earth. Then thou twistest and whistlest like a serpent, biting the heels of the rock. Thou boundest on them—thou bitest them like a tiger, grumbling and coloured by passion. Like an artful man, thou glidest under their feet; thou filest, thou sawest, thou gnawest the openings which time has made in their flames, and strikest ceaselessly with thy humid flashes. Thou willest, as in times of old, to flood and swallow up

the earth, which thou hast conceived and since covered more than once! Come on, new Saturnus! thou shalt not devour thy child; thou hast bestowed on him but the body, and God has infused spirit therein — *man*. And is it to be his or her fate to fall a prey to the elements?

Yes, I have seen many a sea, and have conceived affection for them all; but the Caspian Sea is the most beloved of mine: thou wert my only friend in misfortune, and hast preserved both my mind and body. Like the victim of a shipwreck, I have been cast by the storm on the wild expanse of nature, and lonely, I have not known it.

I have not awaited either the harvest of the field or the prey of the forest; I have not dragged out of the sea either its finny tribes or its precious treasures. I did not seek thus either means of existence or earthly pleasures; I have asked from it but counsel for knowing life, and to rule my passions; I have not attempted to rule the elements, I wanted but to identify myself with them; and the union of the heart's offspring of the earth, with the daughter of heaven, was one fraught with delight. Here ambition did not place a bar between me and nature, and the mob of men did not prevent me uniting with the universe. My mind reflected it faithfully, and I lost myself in delight in its incommensurable precincts—the limits between myself and her disappeared. The oblivion of myself resolved itself into a sweet and holy enjoyment, and my individual and public life vanished into a drop of time spilt in the ocean of eternity.

But, aside this, I have been attracted to thee by a conformity of thy destiny and mine. Thy waters are more

shallow and bitter than those of other seas.* Shut up in the prison of sandy and wild shores, thou complainest lonely, and thy waters remain unmixed. Thou knowest neither ebb nor flood, and even in thy accesses of wrath thou canst not expand thy storms beyond the limits assigned to thee by the finger of the Eternal. And who knows how thou canst engulph so many immense rivers which fall into thy deeps? Who can comprehend thy submarine volcanoes, those which vomit fire and those which throw out mud?† Who will inform us how many nations, whose names are lost, have passed over thy shores and over thy waves? how many nameless victims have been swallowed up in thy abysses? Thou revealest neither the traces of the one nor the blood of the other; a few fragments thrown on the beach alone prove the number of precious objects swallowed up in thy deeps.

It is not the lapse of years, it is the storm which wrinkles thy brow; the tempests—those passions of the heavens. Then thou becomest terrible, troubled, noiseful; but, as for contrast sake, sometimes also transparent and tranquil, thou bathest in thy bosom lap the rays of the sun and the rights of man, and thou goest to slumber playing with the shells of the shore, like the child which stammers the song of the cradle.

Yes, Caspian, there exist in me more than one of thy

* The surface of the Caspian Sea is three hundred feet below the level of other parts of the ocean. The waters of the ocean contain thirty to forty-five parts of saline matter in one thousand. The proportion in the Caspian sea is sixty to one thousand. The Dead Sea has four hundred and forty in the thousand.

† The latter are to be found on nearly all the islands of Bakou, and the fountains of fire are not scarce in the Caspian Sea.

elements, and thou hast more than one of mine, except the will and the knowledge. Thou canst not be otherwise than as thou art, and I could. Now I shall say with Ryleieff:—"I know the fate which awaits those who first rise against the oppressors of a nation."

A crown of rays of light is majestic, a crown of oak is fine, a crown of flowers is pretty, but why should a crown of thorns not be the like?

Farewell, Caspia, once more farewell! I wished to see thee, and I have seen thee without wishing it. I leave thee sorrowful, but I wish not to see thee again, except if thou wouldst make me a way of thy waters to return to my country.

I cast a last look at the imposing picture of the stormy sea. The waves rolled in vast terraces towards the shore, shook their heads in smoke and in drops, brake in foam against the towers of wall which they had demolished,* and mounted on the sand, and laid it bare to a great extent. A sort of misty rain, which the wind tore off their summits, hovered at the surface of the sea, and she, as a chameleon, in fine changed from green to blue, to white, and shone and vanished in a moment.

When, with oppressed heart, I turned my horse, it appeared to me that sea and wind combined their voice in a sigh, and that the waves, like children, sprung up and asked me to take them on my saddle. I slackened my bridle, and my delighted horse, with one jump, put me on dry ground.

* There is no doubt that the old walls of Derbent reached far into the sea and were shut up by a dyke with a door, which formed a secure harbour. Often, when swimming and plunging, I can say that I touched the foundations of these ruins.

When I returned to town my cheeks were wet, but it was not with the waters of the sea.

FROM SHERVAN TO KUNAKENT, SHAMAKHA.

Down from my horse! It is impossible to keep oneself on horseback on this steep slope. I walk, and my ironed heels glide on the rock,—my breast heaves with effort; still, I am no novice. I twist the tail of the horse round my fist, and the animal drags me to the top of the mountain. I did not object; this is a delicious way to perform picturesque journeys. I would have gladly asked some of the dandies of St. Petersburg to dance a gallopade on these sharp rocks: before my face, the ironed hoofs of my horse; to the right, a rock which menaced to fall on my head; to the left, a precipice which reaches to the depths of the earth; behind, a steep slope, uneven, slippery, made so by the cascades, under the command of the demons of the Caucasus; and if the hurricanes of this place do not disperse him in perfume powder,—if the briars and bramble do not convert him into *papillottes* at half way, it is certain that he will have to speak of it the half of his life, and to repent it during all his life. But, alas, what magnificent sights at each turning,—at each step through these rocks! Reach here with a railway, illumine with gas the grottoes, the lair of the panther; build hotels, where now glitter the muskets of the *brigands* of these mountains, and you may be sure that English lords and the naibs (nabobs) will not regret a thousand pounds sterling, for that which I enjoy at present at the rate of 5 kopecks the werst.*

* The tariff beyond the Caucasus is two kopecks for the werst, as well on the grand as on the transversal roads.

The forest becomes lighter, I leave it without sorrow; it has not yet assumed the general uniform of the spring,—the green; it affords neither shelter against the rain, nor protection against the rays of the sun. Some seared trunks of trees, rotten from the inclement elements, follow me up to the limits of the growth of vegetation, and shake, as by the hand of witches, the long and gloomy festoons of ivy. They are replaced by tufts of bramble, which have sprung up from their fissures like families of gipsies and warm themselves at the sun; see two caldrons which have taken each other by the hair, like our *moujiks* at the fair; and by and bye there is nothing but a consumptive juniper tree, which shakes its head as if it were in doubt to live the next day, and gently drew wind. Moss now reddens alone the ledges of the rock, looking like paint on the cheeks of an old woman. This is already the last strife between organic and inorganic nature; further on, and nature slumbers a sleep without awakening—a sleep of stone, wrapped up in the shroud of eternal snow; further on, she utters but signs of exclamation, the winds of the hurricane and the ecstacy of a sentimental traveller.

But, however disposed I might be to joke on every thing and every one, when I had reached the summit of the mountain which divides the province of Kouba from that of Shamakha, when I had looked around me, I became mute with enchantment, as if I had met, without expecting it, *her*—the soul of my soul, as if an angel had brought me the news of my pardon. Here, yes here, where there is more heaven than earth, men ought to throw away pencil and graver in disgust; forget their language,—paled, poor language. There is no force for expressing, no means for condensing the sentiments of astonishment which overflow the heart,—

set the mind on fire, and make it spread in albeit isolated and detached thought.

Look to the East! Do you perceive here below, in the deep between the blue of heaven and the distant glare, a sheet of living silver? It is the Caspian! But who will tell where are the limits between sea and land, where water ends and earth commences? See that harmony accessible to the mind alone, which combines into one single harmony, one single outburst—heaven and earth. See this rainbow of the beautiful, rising up like a bridge between the universe and God.

I admire unceasingly. It is splendid, it is so fine, that tears come involuntarily into my eyes. The sun is at a level with my head; like a ship on fire he glides in the ocean of the air of rubies, he dashes forth rays of light, and streams the gold of light and paints with enamel the wavy mountain chains in the distance. Behind this appears, here and there, the yellowish green of fields, through which meander rivulets and sources, and all this tableau smiles to you from the dark shadows of the slopes of rock, burning, brilliant, life-ful, as the sleep of the youth, inaccessible and distant like the lost garden of Eden. The mountains divide before me ray-like and in circles, they lift themselves and strive to appear one before the other; the one, corroded by the rains of heaven; the other, pierced by crevices; here darkened by gloomy forests, there adorned by ribbons of snow, or in manticlues, which, like some Emir with a green turban, are seated in the shade of the tents of the Paradise of the universe.

Meanwhile the clouds fly above the summits, like those herds of migrating birds, or they climb the heights of rocks like a flock of mountain sheep, leaving tufts of wool on the

edges of the rock, sharp like thorns; or they repose like a caravan of camels, rich of the harvest of rains, at the entrance of the Caravanserai. See here a cloud which, opening its wings like a white eagle suspended above the precipice, will fall down and fill it up. Another has fallen and has frozen on the top of the *Shah-Dag*, not now, but on the day of creation. A like cloud is to my feet, but its snow is so clean, that it were a sin to impress on it the marks of my steps. I fear to breathe, for the sake of not defacing, by the breath, these heavens so pure, for not infecting, with the corrupted respiration of men, their subtile air of the mount. It seems, indeed, that no man has come here ever yet; all is so wild, so lonely and original! I do not perceive all around neither castles, nor town, or village, or habitation, nowhere any trace of furrow or the roads of man. On the rear of the rocks, I see here and there the black traces of lightning, and crevices opened by superficial springs; the streams alone converse around me, in running over stones, or dragging them along; or also, the forest sighs and the wind whistles. Neither the steps of a horse, nor the hoe of a villager are heard here,—here reigns nature and not men.

But a day will come, when men will intrude on thy solitudes, and thou wilt intoxicate thyself of their sweat, as now thou quenchest thy thirst with the heavenly dew; and they will inhabit thy caverns and thy mysterious defiles; they will cover thee with the dust of their life social, and with mud up to thy summits; they will pierce thy breast with mines and quarries; they will uncover thy entrails; they will rip thee up, disfigure, and rase thee; they will make thee work for their avidity; make thee the handmaid of their fancies; they will teach to the echo of

these mountains their poor lays; they will force the torrent to grind their grain, and will make creams of thy virgin ice. No doubt that man will gain by these changes, but the past will be the losers. He will find no single, isolated spot where to hide his heart before the world; nowhere where he may breathe alone with nature, nor freely outpour the pains of the soul. Little man will never drive the jackall from its grotto den—deprive the eagle of his nest, and place therein the spotted eggs of the cuckoo. In a word, the *comfort* will kill the majesty of thought as that of social life! Thou wilt be more pretty, my Caucasus; but wilt thou be then handsome still? They may embellish thee, but thou art better as thou art now.

I feel myself so well and light—so light indeed, that I feel as if wings were growing to me and unfolding themselves; it appears to me, that I have but to knock my feet at this soil of the heavenly dwellings, to be enrolled in heaven, to my home, to my sisters—the stars. Oh! nature has hidden a great, heavenly thought in the heart of mountains—those giants of stone, and has crowned them with pure and heavenly glory. Before it we incline reverently our head, because it is dangerous to climb hither, and thence we easily divine our destiny. Below, on seeing that immense mass, one is scared with astonishment; but here, on high, we are transported by admiration, which is the conscience of the beautiful—a proud and free conscience—because it lowers itself before *him*, who is more than *we*. The beautiful is the Aurora of truth—and truth is a ray of the divine—which has broken off from the substance eternal. This, therefore, is the reason why this sentiment rises in the soul like a remem-

brance of the past! It is known to him—it is betrothed to him. I look at the Caucasus, and it seems to me as if it were not for the first time that I am here; it seems to me as if my cradle had been rocked by the waters of the torrent below, and that the winds have lulled me to sleep; it appears to me as if I had wandered about these mountains, picked in the times of my childhood, and that at that time I was as old as the world of God.

And who will say that I was not contemporary to it? Do the particles and elements of my body not take date from eternity, and did my soul not live before in the lap of nature?

I descend towards the *Shirvan*, the land of the sun—the land richest in grain of all the lands of the Caucasus. Before me is displayed an emerald sea of mountain chains, furrowed by the black and sheltered picks of the north; by the snowy mountains of the Lezguistan, the *Kasikumouk* and the *Eliss*; on the west, by the mountain wall of the *Karabakh*. My trusty horse glides on its tail, or jumps with great precision from one block to the others, which bar a narrow path along, and through which fall with great noise the rivulets of melted snow. At times, on rounding a rock, my horse snorts, and shrinks back in terror, as he finds no support at all for his hoofs; and the abyss shines through the crevices, like the mouth of a monster of an enormous boa, whose respiration drags irresistibly its prey from the very depth of the forest, and often even the mild swallow from off the height of the heavens. Throw down the bridle; confide thy soul to God, and thy body to the steed, and do not turn thy eyes from the brim of the precipice, where the sun even fears to look, else thy heart would follow the impulse.

*Tchapar-Khan,** where is then Shaytan-Kuprissi,—the devil's bridge, which they have been so much frightened with? Had it, perhaps, like its builder, fled before the cunning and the daring of men?

"We have passed it already, a long time since," answered the guide.

It is the same with all these frights; we expect them face to face, and they are already in our rear.

Still, said the virtuous *Tchapar*, most happy that I entered into conversation with him, the devil has had, indeed, much trouble in this affair. Permit, that I say, he first lived at the court of Gadishah of Persia, but as he could not design with his tail the chiffers which the mirras make on the firmans, and as his back could not bend in twenty-five different curvatures, as those of the courtiers, they have given him, poor devil, the bastinado on his heels, and driven him from the door of the *Shegin-shah* (king of kings). With broken nose and luxated tail he has fled, he has run to the town.† I will, thought he, devote myself to commerce. The townspeople are stupid: I have seen how the herd of courtiers fleece them, and draw the ducats from their pocket by oily words. See then, he sells his horns to a cutler to make handles of knives of. The devil is quite *gaie* of the possession of his *abasses*, and he does not think that they are of tin. The *tchavuches* assist him with his bad money, and as no one will bail the devil: then comes the *felakk*.‡ He hardly creeps, he runs without looking behind: he thinks, he meditates, he ransacks his

* Tchapar, a guide.

† The oriental people use at every moment the pleonasma, *gur*, *bakh*, see, look; *ichliady, courtardy*, he has done it,—has completed it.

‡ Board with two openings, in which the feet of the culprit are placed, the board is then lifted up, and the execution is effected with a stick.

intelligence and his wits. I will, says he, live with the country-people, they are simple and obscure—it will be easy to cheat them; every one, except the idle, can fleece them. See, he then meets a peasant. *Seliam aleikum, aleikum Seliam*! Where art thou going to, good man, along this road? It is fine weather,—it could not be finer for one who will drown himself. Oh, thinks the devil, the pheasant flies himself towards the sportsman; his soul shall not escape my talons, I must profit at his death of his *tchouga* (coat) while he is yet alive.

And what desire has thou to drown thyself? asked the devil.

I have nothing to eat, at least I would wish to drink abundantly!

All right, brother, and I shall get thee out of thy difficulty.

Oh, then, I will be thy slave for life! Thou shalt be my khan, my master, my father, *Vallah, billah, tallah.*

Here, my darling, this is what I shall do; let us buy grain and let us sow it in a field, this is thy affair: only I shall keep three-fourths of the harvest to myself, and give thee a fourth. Dost thou consent?

Sparks of joy shot from the eyes of the peasant, and his heart becomes sweet and soft like honey.

I leave to thee, not only the three-fourths, but all that shall sprout above ground; I am satisfied with the roots.

Words were as good as deeds; the bargain was struck. The devil now pledges his fur coat to a *fakir*, for two *tomans*. The devil buys seeds of radishes, parsley, carrots, and of turnips, and sows a field not far from the three crosses. The devil does not sleep at night, does not rest

by day, brings water, drives the finches away, and shakes in his skin; he expects the grain. All ripens, all is brought home. The peasant, as a conscientious man, returns to the devil all the herb, and keeps but the roots. The devil is mad of disappointment. The peasant is established and lives luxuriantly, and the herbs are not even fit for the market.

Wait, said he to himself, this time they shall not get the better of me; at once I have become twice wiser. He meets again the peasant, and gives him some seed; only, my friend, this time thou wilt excuse me, this harvest take thou the stalks, and give me the roots. The peasant gave him a shake of the hand.

Thou art right—we must balance our affairs.

He sows again; but he sows no more vegetables; he sows corn. It sprouts like emeralds—it ripens like gold; the peasant waves it with all his might, and laughs in his sleeves; and the devil is more surprised than before; the asses even do not eat such roots. He begins at last to see clear, and although late, he puts his finger in the mouth.

Cursed *manlets*, exclaims the demon, in wiping off his tears with his tail; you have surpassed me in everything, and you dare still to accuse me of everything, and put calumny and wrong on my back. Leave without me. I am quite superfluous amongst you. He plunged therefore under ground, since which we have neither seen or heard of him. The *Fakir* has made himself a fur coat of what remained to him of the skin of the devil, and the neighbours tell that he has resold it again to our *Cadi*.

THE LAST RELAIE BEFORE OLD SHAMANKHA.

An infernal route—divine sights!
I am paid with usury for all trouble and difficulties.

Before sunset I have arrived in a little town, whose name is vanished—the last *mensilinn* before Shamankha.

Nowhere have I yet found so poor huts and cabins; no tree before the habitations; no garden around the village; no doubt that the inhabitants leave, during the heat of summer, for the mountains. Moreover, it is not in Asia like in Europe, the proximity of large cities does not enrich but impoverish the surrounding villages. If a courier wants a horse, he takes it in the outside of the town, The *beg* or the *nasir*, if they require a fowl or sheep, they are sought for in the village. If they take a fancy to make a pleasure party in the fresh air, they also go to the village. The lord of a district pays an impost as well to the wrath as to the joy of the chief of the province. No one dares to say—to-morrow I shall go in *anbe* to fetch wood in the forest, or surely my daughter shall be his wife to-day. The peasant had nothing certain but strokes of the stick and imposts; in revenge the one and the other came to him without account and without a will. Still, the Circassians long after the past.—"This," they say, "was a golden time." Oh! men, when shall you live in peace and harmony with that which is?

Here, the crevices become enlarged into a plain, on which meanders a clear rivulet. The surrounding mountains are not abrupt like the style of *Derjavine*, but rounded as the verses of *Jazykoff*, with striking vegetation, but nowhere either oaks or roses. Only here and there some passing clouds project poetry on some mountain pick. Oh! I am now spoiled by nature like a happy lover; I am capricious like a proud lord; I do not condescend to look at aught common or ordinary. The braying and neighing herds returned from their pasture.

The people being placed in a circle, discoursed and made a noise. I, extended on my bourka, smoked quietly my pipe, inspiring in turns the fragrant vapour of America and the pure air of Asia. Children almost naked jumped around me; further on, enormous mastiffs, growling with distrust, amused the new comers; meantime women drew water with pitchers, and came to and fro carrying them on their heads. Through all the grades of nature, commencing with the rational being down to the stone, reigned a sort of infantine, and as it were biblic, simplicity. It is but here—it is only in the Orient that you will comprehend the pictures and the costumes of the Books of the Old Testament. The hieroglyph will become a letter—the enigma a living word.

In a quarter of an hour, all was ready—the horses saddled and waiting. "Is it far to the Town?" "Two *agatch bigum.*" "And how; is not this too much?" "Perhaps; who has measured them?" It is more than seven hours. Please God we may arrive for the night in the kingdom of Silk, that city so renowned in our songs and tales, that neither the Czar Czarewitz, nor the Prince Royal, nor John, the son of the merchant, will dare to mount a horse, without a Circassian saddle and a silk bridle of Shamakha.

They bring two good horses—good only because they do not bite. The foot in the stirrup, the whip in hand, and we start. I ascend the rapid slope—a slope most rapid, of a very high mountain. I reach the summit; I trample the snow, which melts; I hasten to salute the sun, which hides itself behind the black mountains of the *Karabakh.* It went away like a Pasha in the inaccessible doors of his fortress, surrounded by Janissaries, the clouds streaming with gold and purple. Oh! without having

seen it, it is impossible to imagine—and it is impossible, after having seen it, to describe all the beauty of this twilight. A sort of sweet, transparent violet mist covers like a veil all this mountain world. Like a grey dove which descends from on high on its native roof, so lowers on the earth the loveliness of a twilight, and it seems to you as if you heard the movement of its wings, as if you felt on your cheeks the dew which it drops from its odoriferous wings. And all is silent—all from the voice of nature to the very passions of men, which appear to be drowned in the pious silence of prayer, and which heaven receives with a benediction. Yes, it is not in vain that the mountains have been the primitive temples, and thanksgiving the only sort of prayer. At least my mind, like the Mimosa, has always felt itself collapsed by the rude hand of misfortune, nor has the stillness of solitude or the incense of the prayer re-opened it. When the lion of death growled at my side—when one thunderclap after the other smote my heart—I confess that I have not thought it pusillanimity to demand pardon of the *Most High;* I considered to offend eternal justice by the thought, that a tardy repentance or a prayer out of place could change the decisions of eternity. I inclined then my head in saying: "Thy will be done!" But when God by his breath moved the waves of the sea, and when those in their rolling rose like a wall in the distance, anxious but impotent, to devour me; when he then sent me those rare moments—very rare moments—but full of a pure and holy joy, then my prayer was disinterested, and my thanksgiving an echo of his high beneficence, expressed in tears of deep emotion—tears of joy, which even long subsequent misfortune could not quench. Fate has tracked out my

path amongst thorns and stones, night and storm; but to me also the stars have shone at times, and I knew how to bless each ray which fell on me. Most often those sparks of happiness have reached me when I erred on the heights of mountains. I then understood with my soul that hymn of praise, "Glory to the Lord of heavens and peace on earth."

I descend, and I again ascend to the summit. The earth slumbers in the arms of heaven. How the heaven is fire! I look, and cannot cease looking; because, can one exhaust immensity? can the heart become fatigued of eternal, inimitable beauty? The sun sheds forth from its invisible eye the vermillion of the face of the west. The clouds play on the horizon, and change every moment their strange images, in drowning themselves in the nearest obscurity. Yes, the heavens meditate on the present moment; those clouds resemble now the visions of the just, who now fall asleep; they belong at the same time to the heavens and the earth—to one and the other life.

See! it is night: she has profusely sown the heavens with stars, which shine with ardour, but also with mystery under this blue skull: are then the thoughts of the universe always clear, always unchanging: there are letters, of which we can hardly compose a word, and this word is God!

We proceed constantly, and the road seems endless. *Shamakha* seemed to peep out once or twice between the waves of clouds, and then has again disappeared. I have been more than once nearly drowned myself in the swamp, in every hole formed by the thawing snow. The horse also often sunk up to his breast, and to drag

him out, it required every time at least ten strokes of the whip, and twenty Russian and Tartar oaths mingled. If, at least, the moon would appear. If one speaks of her, she appears. Direct to our appeal, she at once jumped out of the heavens. She strides without marching; she shines without appearing; at times she amuses herself to walk with the stars; at times she pursues the stars, and has no thought to afford sufficient light to an honest traveller. Oh, moon! do not forget thy duty—do not quarrel with me, or else I will bring a suit against thee.

Let us put the moon in prose.

Primo.—The age of this old coquette is very equivocal. There are people who say that she could be the grandmother of the earth; others say that, in times past, she has held the office as a comet; like the erring few she had strolled in all the universe, and changed *en passant* one celestial system for another, as we change those of philosophy; then the centripetal force of the earth had attracted her, and then she has permanently settled down in the capacity of a satellite and drags on after the earth up to the present time; mixes herself up with ebb and flood and the asylums of lunatics, showers on her parcels of volcanoes, in gratifying her mistress from time of a cargo of ærolites and shooting stars.

It is said that the spots which the poets take for the eyes, the nose and the mouth of the moon, and the vulgar for the image of Cain—obliged, so to say, to carry continually the corpse of the brother whom he had killed—are but the shadow of immense mountains of the moon, and the bottom of immense precipices which the rays of the sun are unable to illumine. The most probable, however, is, that those spots are the wrinkles of age.

The adulterous moon does not only help lovers. Read Basil Hall, and you will see that the moon is the ally of the smugglers and pirates. What concerns robbers on land, you may address yourselves to me. I will tell you many interesting things of those knights of the moon, although they have never been knights of the order of the moon.

"Apropos *Tchapar*, are there no robbers here?"

Robbers, he answers, we hear no more of at present. It is more than a month since a single man has been killed,—robberies are committed here from time to time,—the young people require some amusement; these are trifles; but in former times,—silence, dog,—do you hear—silence, I tell thee. "Formerly, *Tchapar*, what?" He does not cease to bark; he has caught the scent of of some beast.

My greyhound became restive, and scratching the ground and moving his ears, sprung backwards and forwards. Might not some robbers be near in earnest? I primed my pistol, spurred my fatigued horse, and ascended the hill, where the hound barked furiously.

The moon shone right on the summit and there . . . . It is the custom in all the mountains of the Caucasus, to erect a sort of kiosk on the grave of *Cheikhs*, or *Pins*; viz., people who have well deserved of Allah for their Moslem purity. Often they are dedicated to the memory of pilgrims deceased at Mecca, or to people who have been slain in foreign wars. Every passer-by tears off a piece of his garment, attaches it to one of the branches, which are there placed for that purpose, prays for the soul of the dead, and asks of heaven a happy journey. On the top of the hill, which I had just ascended, there was a rude and flat stone and on it a human skull, which held in its teeth a

shining piece of silver money. I shuddered at seeing these inanimate remains of a human being. It was frightening; his eyes had the appearance of charcoal, his teeth looked as if they were gnashing.

At my call the Tchapar comes, looks, and becomes pale like a shroud. "Allah, Allah," says he, "to what damned place have we arrived? I had purposely avoided this hill, and yet here we are; Aga, this is a bad omen. Let us tear off a strip as a sacrifice and let us go, that Allah may preserve us."

And the Tchapar, in throwing down his offering, had already started: fright was depicted on his face. When I met him again, he turned round and drove on his horse.

"Who is here buried, in this tomb, Tchapar? Why is it that, contrary to the usage of the believer, his skull is placed on the sepulchral stone?"

"A very guilty person lies there, a great curse rests on this spot," and the Tchapar began to narrate to me the history of a malefactor, whose very soul had been repulsed by hell and rejected by the earth.

"Who is there?" shouted the sentry at the entrance of Shamakha.

I rubbed my eyes with astonishment, as if I had tumbled from the times of the past, to the door of Shamakha.

"A soldier," answered I to the sentry.

"What name?" was asked again, perceiving that I was a stranger.

"ALEXANDER MARLINSKI."

"Please, let me see your travelling ticket."

CHAPTER IV.

MENATE.

Y..... viva mi serrana
Con su pe' andaluz;
Ella ei mi soberana,
Mi vida y mi cruz .....
Sus ojos son veneno
Su mirar mi luz .....

WHAT are our females, pale and insipid, compared with those of the brown tint and the dark eyes of the Caucasus? —What the sun of the north is compared with that of the south—what the mountains of Scotland are to those of the Caucasus—that is Menate at the side of Marian. I am unwilling to lower any one, but I cannot make a mountain of a heap of sand. No doubt the fair ones of the north possess their peculiar charms, and I am the last who could prefer a savage, be she ever so handsome, to a civilized woman; but all the different tastes centre in nature, and what is nearest to nature is better than anything else.

Moreover, the hero of this adventure is neither an effeminate Petchorin,* nor an abortive Onegine.† He was an

* The hero of a tale of Lermontof, entitled "The Hero of our Time."

† The hero of a tale of Poushkin, entitled "Eugine Onegine,"—written in rhyme.

exception in nature, who had commenced his career in the Caucasus, and who ended it in Siberia; who had spent his life between the tent and the mines; a man of the times of Alexander, and not of Nicholas, of whom Russia may be proud—a companion of the great conspiracy with Bestoueff, Jakoubovitch. Who does not know that name, celebrated in the annals of the Russian conspiracy of 1825? He was a man of high station. Even his father is renowned —marshal of the nobility at Pultawa—on account of his high bearing, his fiery character, his animated speech and look; but, in this case, the father owes his celebrity to his son.

Two such fine minds as Menate and Jakoubovitch had only to meet for either loving or combating each other.

Jakoubovitch was one of the favourite officers of General Jermoloff; this Moscowian devil; this fright of the Circassians; this patriot, so much loved by the soldiers. There must have been more than one point of resemblance between the simple officer and his general; and if the former is gone to Siberia for expiating his participation in the conspiracy of 1825, it may be that, after all, the second had not been quite a stranger to it. I recollect well that it was then feared that the corps of the Caucasus might separate itself from the army, and hoist the colours of the insurrection. The ambition of Jermoloff was equal to his liberal sentiments. Nicholas, at least, could have had this fear in removing him from the command.

Jakoubovitch held but an inferior rank, but the friendship of Jermoloff confided to him, at times, important places and expeditions. Then, as is the case now, the Tchetchenes gave much to do to Russia; but the strokes of Jermoloff, more decided and more substantial than those of

his accuser, sufficed soon to re-establish Russian power, since then so often compromised in those quarters. Jakoubovitch possessed a high degree of reputation amongst the mountain people; he had, in numerous engagements, killed several Circassians, and courage always obtains the esteem of a gallant enemy; at least it is the case with the Circassian mountaineers. He could pass, unmolested, to and from the Tchetchenes. Moreover, peace alternated with war in the Daghestan, and then the armies came often as guests on the territories of the contending parties.

Jakoubovitch had seen Menate, the daughter of a Tchetchene Bey. To see and love her succeeded each other instantaneously; because, what is love but the desire to possess? The art of coquetting does not exist amongst primitive people, or assumes other forms. It does not consist in giving promises to one, while we may love another. The Caucasian maid holds her heart in her hand, and bestows one together with the other, without any refined calculation.

The Tchetchenian girls are not so handsome as the Circassian, properly so called; still Menate could not be seen without being admired. She had not the foot of the mountain maidens, because she walked but little; her waist would have filled with envy all our land damsels; her eye was that of a gazelle, brilliant and piercing, and her long hair could surround the stoutest man.

It was at this time that Amoulat-Bey had surrendered, and Jermoloff generously pardoned his former deeds, when, by some unknown means, the Lesghien chief escaped from the Russian camp, after having assassinated his benefactor, who, charmed by his great beauty, had obtained for him the pardon of the general commander in chief.

Amoulat Bey escaped to the mountains, revolted to the Tchetchenes, and the aoul where Menate lived took up his cause. The general concentrated his troops, and took measures, of which he thought to possess the secret. But he intended to strike before others the neighbouring aoul, for the sake of re-establishing the fear of the Russian arms. He entrusted Jakoubovitch with the mission. Never was any order more welcome than that he received. He took, at once, a couple of hundred of picked Cossacks, and made himself followed by some infantry, in case that his *coup de main* should not succeed, and marched by a way which he alone knew, as he had often passed it to visit Menate. What does not love do? Once it animated knights errant; to-day it leads brigands. This time it inspired Jakoubovitch with a celerity and force which made his enterprise succeed. The corps of Cossacks flew like a drove of vultures, and, like such, precipitated itself upon the aoul before the break of day, when sleep, most profound, yet rested upon all its dwellers. Jakoubovitch hastened towards the *sakle* (the hut) of Menate, followed by his best horsemen. He awoke her from her sleep, and carried her off, while the soldiers plundered the aoul. Only a few discharges of musketry had been exchanged during the whole enterprise. The inhabitants awoke at last; but the Russians had already driven off the cattle which they had seized. At the entrance of the village, however, the Tchetchenes bounded on the Cossacks with precipitation. The contest was terrible. A ball struck Jakoubovitch on his forehead, but did not put him down. The pistol smoked yet in the hand of the man who had discharged it, when Jakoubovitch, pushing his horse towards him, cut him down with his sword. Menate uttered a cry of horror,

which, however, her abducer did not hear. The Russian infantry showed itself just in time to rescue the Cossacks.

Some weeks after the battle, Jakoubovitch was reclining on his sofa, with his bandaged head. Menate was seated at his side.

"It is still on thy account that I suffer," said the patient.

A trace of pride flushed over the features of Menate, "Do you suffer much?"

"I would not suffer so much if thou wouldst say that thou lovest me. Is it then so hard to thee to say this single word?"

Menate remained silent.

"Thou hatest the Russians. Speak, Menate; open thy mind to me."

"We are fond of war, and especially of war with a generous enemy. We cannot reproach you with the last affair. It was we who provoked it by embracing the cause of Amoulat Bey. But he is conquered, and has fled. Peace has been restored to our aouls. I know that my countrymen detest the Russians, but they make a distinction between the bad and good."

"Oh! if thou didst not detest me, thou wouldst love me."

"To love thee! And what wouldst thou make of me? A plaything, which thou wouldst send back, one day, to my father; and which my parents would not take back."

"Thou knowest me not, Menate; I am a man without prejudice. I went where I have attached myself. Thou knowest *the essavul*, the Cossack officer here; he is married to a Circassian, whom he abduced. Why should I not do the same? If it be this which holds thee

back, cease to fear, and love me! Dost thou will it? Thou dost not answer."

"I never do answer things of this sort."

"How, never! thou hast, therefore, heard them ofttimes? But, tell me, art thou not engaged—dost thou not love already? Fool that I was not to perceive that that which had attracted me in thee must have been pleasing to others, long before me. Oh! speak! speak!"

Menate, who perceived that jealousy animated the features of Jakoubovitch, fearful lest his excitement would impair his wound, took his hand and said:—"Calm thyself; do not think of me. Why laughest thou?"

"I shall recover of my wound in the forehead, but not so easily of that of the heart. But, Menate, thou art in my power—thou art my prisoner, and therefore my slave. Dost thou know it?"

"See, that is the reason why I do not answer your question. Love cannot be hidden. And you are too good a master to force me to love you."

If love, as we have defined it, is the desire to possess, still it is not actual possession which charms us the most; the realisation of our desires is the culminating point whence begins the decline of our inclinations; the most enlivening portion of love is the hope with which is mixed, jealousy—in fact, passion yet unrequited.

Jakoubovitch belonged to that order of candid minds who do not understand women, not having made them an especial study; who, in fine, are not rich and corrupt enough to make a woman their plaything; who, instead of lowering them, elevate them in their own eyes, and embellish them, in their own imagination. He had near him a brother officer, younger than himself, and who,

without being cold-hearted, knew how to resist the first impulsions, so much so, that Jakoubovitch was in the habit of calling him "his dear egotiste." When, in the evening, the tea was served, he said to him, "Well, my dear egotiste, what have you to tell me of, new or consoling?" This was his way of entering into conversation; just as Lermontoff used to say to his comrades, "Tell us one of those charming tales which you tell so well."

"I shall always sing the same strain," answered the officer, whose name it is unnecessary to mention. "Love is madness; it is more than madness, it is an error which leads us to the committal of many more."

"Yes, I am wounded because I have carried off Menate; others have been so because they put their hand on a sheep. No, my dear egotiste, love is a sacred thing, which produces self-devotion—self-sacrifice."

"What, then, is all this? Two other follies! Love engenders jealousy, distrust, hatred, disquietude."

"Thou hast never loved."

"I have never committed this sort of folly."

"And shalt thou never yet commit it?"

"Never."

"We must forswear nothing. The whole life of man is one string of follies. Thou amusest thyself with drink; I, on the contrary, get drunk with love."

"But I never get tipsy, and thou art intoxicated."

Menate listened, without understanding anything of this conversation in Russian, when some presents, which Jakoubovitch had made her, were brought in. She understood *this* language, and when the other officer was gone, she said to Jakoubovitch:—

"I wish not that you should create yourself illusions; I must not love you—I am betrothed."

Jakoubovitch fixed his eyes on her for a moment, and then said:—"With you girls, one comes always too late. You begin to love with your first breath of life, as the birds begin to sing, and the plants to scatter their perfumes about; but there are misfortunes more formidable than this. The days follow each other—but are unlike each other."

"I have promised; and I will be the wife of none but a Tchetchene."

"But I love thee, Menate. Knowest thou what this word contains of passion, of suffering, and of hope? Wilt thou break my heart?"

"You are a man, and you ought to suffer with greater fortitude than we poor women. You would certainly not wish that I should break my oath. I dare not—I must not love you. I must know how to rule my heart, as I have disposed of it. Interest cannot change my resolve, and your Padi-shah (Emperor) himself could not be my husband."

"No, because I know that you love me, but you will forget me. Is it not so?"

Jakoubovitch took between his teeth the handkerchief which was around his wounded head, and was silent.

The next morning two Tchetchenian chiefs were announced, who wished to see him. One was the father, and the other the betrothed of Menate. On entering, the father cast a searching look at his daughter.

"I do not know whether I shall open my arms to thee. Art thou yet but a prisoner, or art thou already a kept woman?"

Menate pointed at the wound of Jakoubovitch, as if to

show that a sick man was not to be dreaded. Then saying that he was as noble-hearted as brave, she embraced her father.

In the meanwhile Jakoubovitch observed the companion of the old man, and by the large wound, hardly healed, which he had over his face, he recognized his adversary of the last rencontre.

"What do you want of me?" said he to him.

"Hear, Russian," said the Tchetchene; "they say thou art noble and great. I have experienced thy courage and the force of thy arm, and I come to try thy mind. Thou hast taken my bethrothed. Return her to me."

There was in the look and motions of the Tchetchene a freedom and hope which pleased him.

"Thou wouldst not like to do ill," said the father of Menate; "make a father unhappy, and deprive a bride of her dearest friend?"

"I shall do all that," said Jakoubovitch, "if Menate will consent. It is left to her to decide on her lot."

"Let me return to my native land; return me to my father, to him who was destined to become my husband."

"Well, then, take her," answered Jakoubovitch, turning his head.

The footsteps of horses soon informed him that Menate was returning to the place whence he had taken her.

The friend of Jakoubovitch came in at this moment.

"Thou wilt then ever commit follies—one was to carry off this woman, and the other to give her back."

"I think I have done a good action, and it renders me more happy than the possession of a woman whose heart belongs to another."

"And some say that woman is better than man. I

admire thee, my friend; but I approve not thy action. It would appear, moreover, that whoever is first at the mill gets the first grist."

The wound of Jakoubovitch healed, but never became closed. He was afterwards often seen before a mirror, feeling the fractures of his skull, and he never ceased to wear a bandage on his head.

Some years afterwards he was at St. Petersburg; and on the 14th December, 1825, on the Isaac square. The Emperor gave him several orders respecting the insurgents, not knowing that he was one of the conspirators. Jakoubovitch had a loaded pistol by him, and could easily have shot the Emperor. By way of gratitude the magnanimous Czar sent him to Siberia, under a sentence of hard labour.

CHAPTER V.

DESCRIPTION OF THE COUNTRY.

Caucasus—Elbrous—Kasbek—Confusion concerning that Name—Ascensions—Veneration of the Mountains among the Ossetians—Paitigorsk—Composition of the Chain—Passages—The Black and Caspian Seas—The Rivers of the Caucasus—Kouban—Terek—Kour—Rhion—Koissou—Their tributary Streams—Want of Lakes.

THE word *Caucasus* is, according to Plinius, derived from the Scythian word *Graucasus*, which means *whitened by the snow*. But nothing has yet been brought forward in favour of that etymology. We think it preferable to derive Caucasus from Koh-Chaf or Ckasp, signifying Caspian Mounts. The Turks call it Kaf-Daghi; and Daghi means a mountain. With regard to the natives, they give it the name of Elbrous, which is a generic Persian word meaning Icy Mountains.

The chain of the Caucasus extends from the Black Sea to the Caspian Sea, and is divided into two parts, the northern and the southern. Its length from Anapa to Bakou is 690 English miles, but its breadth is only 30 leagues, if the inferior Caucasus—that is Ararat—be not included.

Its highest summits are Elbrous and Kasbek. The height of the first is, according to Lenz, 16,330 feet; and

that of the second, according to Parrot and Engelhardt, 14,400.

The Circassians give to Elbrous the name of Dshin-Padischah—that is the King of the Spirits; and also that of Nogai-Huscha, the meaning of which is the Mountain of the Nogai (Tartars).

The Tartars themselves call it Kaf-Dagh; but in Hungarian Elboruloz signifies, "Thou prostrate thyself before that sacred mountain."

Kasbek is called by the natives Mquinvari and also Urs-Coch, meaning White Mount. The word Kasbek has led to several mistakes, which we are going to explain.

We read in Klaporth*:—"Mr. Gamba is mistaken when he says that it was General Kasbek who gave that name to the village and mountain."

The anonymous author of the "Letters on the Caucasus and Georgia" † says:—"Arrived at the place called Kasibek, we were received very politely by Colonel Kasibek, thus called after the mountain of that name, at the foot of which he dwells."

A General might indeed give his name to a mountain; for on a map done at St. Petersburg by General Shubert the mountain Merchotchi is called Weliaminoff, after the name of a General well known in the Caucasus.

But Kasbek is not a proper name; it is the Persian title Kasi-bey, which is hereditary in the family Tsobichan-Chwili, entrusted with the office of guarding the defile and administering the plain of the Upper Terek in the district Chewi.

The Russians have given to the prairie, to the mountain, and to the village the name of Stephan Tzminda Kasbek. As the family Tsobichata, of an Ossetian origin, has entered

* Description of the Caucasus. † Hamburg, 1815.

the service of Russia, it is not at all surprising that a traveller met, in 1812, a colonel and his son, a major, called Kasbek.

Mr. Ditson, in his recent journey to the Caucasus, says that he could not learn the history of the church of Zminda. We think that he referred to Stephan-Zmindi, a church which was erected by the wife of the prince of Kasbeck, who was a native of Kabardah, and a Christian woman.

The Elbrous is distinguished by two summits; and the Kasbek has only one, of a conic form. The first mountain has a likeness to the *Two Mamelles* of the Island of France, and was ascended upon the 23rd of July, 1829, by a Kabardian Khillar, who formed a part of the expedition undertaken for that purpose by General Emmanuel.

According to a tradition, Noah's ark stopped on the Elbrous before reaching the Ararat; and the cradle of Christ is found on the Kasbek, standing above the tent of Abraham, which is itself suspended in the air. The same tradition relates that there is a treasure which has tempted several persons, whose curiosity has always been punished by the loss of their sight.

The indigenous consider the mountains as deities, and pay them divine honours. The Ossetians specially venerate the Sikara, or the tops of Brut-Sabsdi.

If the high summits are generally called white or snowy mountains, the appellation of *dark mountains* is, on the contrary, bestowed on those which are lower, and which, at one extremity, extend towards the Black Sea, and at the other towards the Caspian Sea.

On the east of the Elbrous arises a group of five mountains, properly called *Bechtan;* as *besch* means "five,"

and *dagh* signifies a mountain. The same group is, in Russian, called Piatigorie, from *piat*, "five," and *gora*, "mountain." The one which stands in the middle is named Beshtovaia Gora. But Mashut is the highest of all Then comes Gelesnaia Gora (iron mountain), and next, Smeinaia Gora, which means the mountain of the serpents. On the east are situated Barbel, Shah-Dagh, Dast-Dagh, Barba-Dagh, and, finally, near the Caspian Sea, Besh-Parmaki-Dagh, that is the mountain of the five fingers, whose height is 3,000 feet.

Kasbek is of a volcanic origin, and its side is covered with eruptive matter. Porphyry, in the upper sheets, and granite, standing underneath, form the principal nucleus, which lowers towards the east in calcareous or clay strata.

There are more than four passages which lead from Europe to Asia. There are six which cross the chief part of the chain; two roads are principally frequented—the passage of Dariel, which was, for the first time, crossed with military stores by General Todleben. That passage was the Porta Caucasia of the ancients.

The other road extends along the Caspian Sea, and leads through the passage of Derbend, from Kisliar to Bakou.

However, the most easy communications are carried on through the sea. But we must here remark that the Black Sea deserves its ominous appellation, not on account of the colour of its water, but on account of the tempests that rage there. The ancients were known for their dread of the Pont-Euxine. In fact disasters have been numerous on that Sea. The greatest, in modern times, occurred in 1838, when several Russian men of war were shipwrecked, and driven aground near Suhum-Kale.

"To navigate the Euxine before the month of May, or

after that of September, is esteemed the most unquestionable instance of rashness and folly."—(Gibbon, "Roman Empire," I, 159.)

The Caspian Sea offers perhaps still greater dangers. We shall have an opportunity of speaking of it in another place.

As the Caucasus is washed by those two seas—the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea, it is not difficult for the Russians to maintain their power over the two opposite sides of the country and to carry on war. In fact, whilst they easily receive the stores destined for them, they prevent, by their blockade, their enemies from obtaining any assistance.

However, the results have not answered the expectations that were entertained; and the expenses for garrisons and ships have much exceeded the amount that had been considered sufficient.

The Russians bring the provisions down the Volga, and draw from Siberia their ammunition of war; but both articles are of bad quality; for, by passing through the hands of different dishonest agents, they are ordinarily in a wretched condition when they reach their destination.

Besides, we must add that the English and the Turks find out the means, in spite of the blockade, of conveying, through Suhum-Kale, assistance to the Circassians.

There is no sea without rivers which empty their waters into it. These rivers are so many arteries, which lead the enemy into the interior of the country. But the rivers of the Caucasus are confined within narrow beds. They are, the most part of them, only torrents, very little fit for navigation; and issuing at a short distance of the sea, they run rapidly towards it through a stony soil. Moreover, in the spring, they overflow their banks, and inundate a vast extent of the country, which they thus render impracticable to the Russian armies.

Another feature in the Caucasus is the absence of lakes, for there are none except a small one on mount Khoi. This is owing to the fact, that mountains are there too steep and too close to one another to allow water to collect and remain there.

The three principal rivers of the Caucasus are the *Kouban*, the *Terek*, and the *Kour*. The first issues from Elbrous, and after having overrun an extent of five hundred versts, it divides into three arms, two of which fall into the Sea of Azov, and the third into the Black Sea. The small and the great Selentchuck, Laba, and Uroup, are its tributary streams.

The Terek takes its source in the Kasbek, and runs four hundred versts. It crosses the passage of Dariel; it divides the territory of Kabardah into small and great Kabardah, and falls, near Kisliar, into the Caspian Sea.

Its chief tributary streams are the Malka and the Sundscha.

The *Kour*, the *Cyrus* of the ancients, runs over a length of eight hundred versts. It is the deepest of all, but it is generally narrow. It takes its source in Turkey, in the mountains of Kars, divides Georgia into two parts, and falls near Saljan into the Caspian Sea.

The *Araxe* joins its waters to those of the Kour, near Dchewat; and the Aragoua flows into it at Mtzetki.

The *Rhion*, called *Phasis* by the ancients, crosses Immeretia and Mingrelia, and after a course of two hundred versts, and after having received the waters of the "River of Horses," Tcheni-Tzchale (Hippius), and those of the Kririla, it falls into the Black Sea near Pote.

The *Koissou* crosses Daghestan under the names of Andi-Avar-Kara-Kasikoumyk-Koissou, and Soulak.

CHAPTER VI.

ETHNOGRAPHY.

Population—Circassian Race, its beauty—Adighe—Manners—Lesghians—Tchetchenes — Abhases — Ossetians — Allans — Souanes — Ingoushes — Kabardians—Georgians, their mode of life—Immeretians, their costume, libations and dancing—Mingrelians—Princes Dadiani—Armenians, their qualities—Tartars, their language—Koumikes—Cossacks, development of their Colonies or *Stanitzas*—Colonies of Kars, of Madjar, of Vladimirovka.

We can know but approximately the number of the Circassians, who laugh at the Russians for counting men like cattle. Russian registers have only some value with regard to the subjected races. The estimates of the population of the whole isthmus, by different writers, vary from one million and a half to three millions.

But if the number of the Tcherkesses able to fight could, in the beginning of the war, be carried to 700,000, it could be so no longer, now that Kabardah takes no share in the struggle.

The above number would indeed allow as to suppose a population of three millions and a half, if it were admitted that all able men bear arms, which is not the case; for, though women are now and then seen fighting in the ranks of the Circassians, yet the peasants are only, through excep-

tion, called upon to take up arms. It is therefore the utmost, if, with the addition of the last acquisitions taken from Persia and Turkey, we can carry to 3,000,000 the population placed under the administration of the Governor-general of Tiflis.

Now, the greatest part is peaceful or allied to the Russians. The Armenians, the Georgians, the Mingrelians and the Immeretians side with the Russians, who have formed a militia among the Ossetians, the Georgians, and other tribes. We therefore should be on the right side if we cut off a figure out of the 700,000 already mentioned.

If, by the denomination of "Circassian race," which is applied to all Europe, it were intended to express that all its inhabitants came from the Caucasus, the error would be great indeed; for the Caucasus could never have contained a population sufficiently numerous to supply so vast a migration. Besides, many tribes, which now occupy its soil, are not aborigines. Therefore, by Circassian race, we merely mean the most regular type of the white race.

Circassian beauty has been by far too much extolled, and the praises lavished on the Circassians are only deserved by noblemen and women; for the mass of the population supplies also its fair share of ugly and ill-shaped individuals. Yet a nation never was robbed of its beauty; and now types of a striking beauty are found among the Cossacks of the Black Sea.

The Circassians, more than any other people, have been free from a mixture with other races; and yet, which is worthy of remark, whenever such a mixture has taken place, it has given the ascendancy to the Circassian blood, and the inferior race has been improved by it.

Now no trace has been left of the sojourn of the Kabardians in Crimea; of the mixture of the Chozars with the Tartars; whilst Circassian women have embellished the Turks and the Russians.

This fact is specially to be witnessed in the *Stanitza Tcherwenaia*, the primitive colonists of which—Russian soldiers—seized upon Tcherkessian women. Their union has produced a population finer than that of their neighbours.

With regard to the improvement of the Circassian race, which some German travellers have been pleased to attribute to the Allans, we question it.

Now let us come to a survey of the different Tcherkessian tribes, and let us begin by stating that the Circassians do not call themselves Tcherkesses, a word which, in the Turkish language, means robbers or cut-throats.

But, in other languages, it is a corruption of the Kerketes of the ancients. *Tcher*, in Persian, means a warrior, and *kes*, somebody. The Russians give the collective name of Tcherkesses to all the mountaineers of the Caucasus, who are divided into many tribes, among whom the *Adighe* hold the first rank; they are, in fact, considered as belonging to the purest Circassian race. Pagans are amongst them more numerous than the Mussulmans. Noblemen and princes alone profess Islamism. The peasants worship a god of the thunder and of war, *Thible*; a god of the fire, a god of the water, a god of the forests, and a god of the travellers. They observe the law of retaliation or blood; practise hospitality and the right of asylum, a distinctive feature with almost all the Circassians. They consider celibacy and embonpoint shameful. Princes distribute the lands to the nobility. Warriors form a separate caste; and

although all the peasants bear arms, yet they go to war but only on extraordinary circumstances.

The different classes are distinguished one from the other through the colour of their slippers. Princes wear red slippers; noblemen, yellow; and the peasants, black.

With regard to matrimony, young girls are sewed up in stags' skins, which the husband cuts open with his dagger on the night of his nuptials. Their slaves are composed of prisoners of war. The Adighe are natives of Kouban; Anapa is the most important place of their country.

The *Lesghians* (Lesges) inhabit Daghestan (mountainous country), and the Russians find them the most troublesome of all; but they are divided into many tribes, and their population amounts to about 400,000.

The *Tchechenes* amount only to 25,000 inhabitants; but, nevertheless, they are in a continual state of revolt against the Russians, by whom they are every time subdued again, but to no purpose.

The Russians have attempted to write the Circassian, through the medium of the Turkish alphabet—the dialectæ Kabardah; but the language more generally understood is the Tartar.

The *Abhasians* differ from the preceding races, not only with regard to the features of their physiognomy, but also to their manners. Less addicted to war than the Circassians, they also more willingly submit to the Russians; they are, nevertheless, the most ancient inhabitants of the Caucasus, and it is pretended that they descend from the Abyssinians. They are indifferent as regards religious matters; and though Christianity was, in the time of Justinian, introduced among them, yet their religion is

merely a mixture of Paganism and Islamism. They particularly venerate the oak. It is among them that the monarchial principle is most deeply rooted; but the dynasty that is actually reigning is more devoted to the Russians than the people.

The *Oubikhs* and the *Tchigates* form the confederation of the *Chapsoukhs,* and are two warrior tribes that inhabit along the coast of the Pont-Euxine. They have, as will be stated in another place, repulsed successfully many attacks of the Russians, and seized upon several of their forts.

The *Ossetians* are the *Jas* of Nestor, or the *Jazyges* of the Russians, therefore a Sclavonian race, and according to the Germans, the descendants of the Alani, who, themselves, were a mixed nation and not a German one.

Count Potocki pretends that they are the *Ossilians* of Ptolemy, who, driven from the Don by the Chosars, came to settle in the passage of Dariel.

The learned Lelevell* says:—

"Many Orientalists speak of the town Allania; however their statements do not sufficiently indicate its site, which is beyond the defile. The defile, Allan Baballan, is evidently the same as the defile Dariel, which the Armenians call Tourn Alanats, that is, Door of the Allans. Massoudi gave a description of it towards the year 947; Edrisi, in 1154, mentions it among numerous defiles; Alboufeda, in 1331, distinguishes it from others as being the greatest of all passages. The town of Allania must therefore have been situated to the north, at the issue of the defile, on the plains of the Terek. The Allans called themselves *Os, As,* and obtained the name of Allans, from the town of Allan,

* Geography of the Middle-age. Brussels, 1582. T. III., p. 200.

which was very ancient, as in fact the word *Allans* was known to antiquity."

If the Ossetians, in the time of the Empress Elizabeth, offered resistance to their being made Christians, it is not so in our own days; for the number of converts is greater than that of the population. This is owing to the fact that, allured by the rewards which the Russian Government offered, and which consisted of a silver rouble, a silver cross, and some garments, the same individual made it a trade to be converted several times and at different places; an occurrence which was facilitated by the carelessness with which Russian priests keep their registers. But though several times converted to Christianity, they are not the less good Mussulmans.

At the foot of the Elbrous, on the river Ingur, and along a space of near forty geographical miles, is situated *Souanethia*, a territory where the winter lasts near nine months.

The *Souanians*, the inhabitants of the above territory, are tall, robust, and can bear severe privations and long marches. They are industrious and peaceful if the country yields them the necessaries of life; otherwise, they plunder or sell their children for slavery.

As among the Abhasians, Christian temples are found on their territory; and it is pretended that they were built by Queen Thamar, of Georgia. However, the Souanes have but little religion, if any at all.

Quite different from the Lesghians, the Souanians carefully hide their wives; but polygamy is not allowed among them; and any man is obliged to marry the widow of his brother.

The *Ingoushes* are also Pagan, though traces of ancient

Christianity are to be found in their habits. In fact, they keep Sunday and other feasts of the Greek Church. They believe in the immortality of the soul, and in a future life; whilst the Souanes believe in the migration of souls.

Kabardah is divided by the Terek into little and great Kabardah. That country, being of an easy access to the Russians, is subjected to them; but the inhabitants are nevertheless, at heart, good Mussulmans. Their manners are in a great measure similar to those of the Adighe; and their princes are of an Arabian origin. The Czars, as we have already stated, considered themselves, in the age of Louis XIV., as the masters of Kabardah.

The *Karatchai*, the *Ralkar*, and the *Rizingli*, acknowledge that they are the descendants of the Magyars. However, their language differs as much from the Hungarian as it does from the Ossetian. But leaving aside the question, which of the two nations has borrowed its number from the other, or if one has lost its primitive language, retaining only the names of the numbers, such a revolution, if it had taken place, would rather prove in favour of a common origin.

With regard to their physical likeness with the Magyars, it is also found among the Cossacks of the line.

The *Georgians*, in German *Georgier*, and in Russian *Grusini*, do not derive their name from St. Gregory, as it has been foolishly pretended by some writers, but from *Ghordistan* or *Ghuria*.

It has been remarked that Islamism could never be established among them, on account of their peculiar fondness for pork and wine.

However the Georgians of the district of Akhaltzik, in Armenia, have been compelled to embrace Islamism, whilst

the Armenians themselves are allowed full freedom in matters of religion.

The Georgians are an agricultural people, and their ploughs are drawn by as many as ten or twelve oxen or buffaloes; but their dwellings are wretched hovels, little better than dens. They bring up silk-worms at home, and keep numerous flocks. Their bridges, on the Kour, are constructed according to the primitive system that prevailed in the time of Cambyses. Skins, the same that are used as leathern bottles to carry wine, are sewed, inflated, and carefully shut. Then they are tied one to the other, so as to cover the water from one bank to the other. Over them planks are fitted up. Such are their bridges.

The Georgians soon reach maturity and old age; and their daughters marry and have children even when they are only eleven years old.

The Georgian costume partakes of both the Persian and the Circassian. The upper garment is called *kaba*, and covers the *arholuh*, and the *sharwali*, which have become fashionable in Russia. The shirts are in silk or cotton.

The Georgians dye their hair, and they display, in that art, a skill equal to that of the Persians.

The *Immeretians* draw their name from ancient Iberia,* which country was probably called so from *wir* or *your*, a denomination which the Armenians and the Georgians gave to the Hebrews who settled in that part of the world.

The Immeretians, as well as the Georgians and Mingrelians, belong to the Kartwell race,* though their languages are distinguished by a striking dissimilarity. The Immeretians wear the Persian costume, except the cap, which is a piece of cloth, fitted up for the purpose, sometimes

* Kartwell, from the Kartos, the son of Torgamos.

embroidered with silver, and which is tied with a string round the chin. This cap, which has the shape of a vine leaf, covers only the surface of the head, and is no protection against the cold. However, its inefficiency is supplied by long and thick hair, which is dyed red, whilst moustaches are dyed black.

The Immeretians cultivate the vine, and are still more fond of wine than the Georgians. Their libations take place amidst sacred hymns, and no other kind of singing is known to them. Their dancing, like Circassian and Persian dancing, consists not of steps but of gestures and simple motions of the feet. Though Christians, they worship ancient idols, and make sacrifices of animals, especially on the tombs of the dead.

The Chevalier de Gamba, who resided a long time at Kutais, pretends that he was the first who introduced wheat into that country. Before that time only Turkish wheat was known. In our own days the Immeretians make with kukarous as bad muffins as those which are eaten in Daghestan.

The word *Mingrelia* is derived from the name of the river Egressi, commonly called Engour. Formerly that appellation was only given to a single district; but the Russians have extended it to Litchekoam, and to Odichi, the name by which the natives designated their country.

It was the Colchis of the ancients. Ruins are still found there, but they no longer draw gold sand from the rivers. The country is poor, and produces only a kind of wood, called tchinai, which is highly esteemed, very hard, and excellent for the construction of ships; but the inhabitants could derive more advantage from it than they do.

The princes of that country, who are called Dadiani,

devoted to the service of Russia, bestow hardly any thought on the happiness of their subjects, who are vegetating in the ignorance of even the most common necessaries of life. However, the country has made some progress since the time of Chardin, who did not find there the use of coin.

With regard to the *Armenians* the two provinces of Erivan and Nachitchewaer were, in 1828, united to Russia, by the treaty of Turkmantchai, and are now included in the administration of the Caucasus. The Araxe forms the southern limit of Russian Armenia, which contains a population of 165,000 inhabitants.

The Armenians have acquired a great name for their commercial skill. In fact, not only do they carry on all the trade in a great part of the Caucasus, but they have also important settlements of that kind throughout all Russia, where their number may be estimated at 400,000.

A Turkish proverb says that no less than a Copt, two Greeks, and three Jews, are required to deceive an Armenian. But it is also pretended that a Genevese is a match for two Jews.

Peter I., consulted whether the Jews were to be allowed to come to Russia, answered: "Let them come, and contend with my people." It is also reported that a king of England gave the same answer.

We shall have another opportunity of speaking again of this last acquisition of Russia, who certainly does not intend to confine herself to that part of Armenia.

THE TARTARS.

Klaproth and Bodenstedt protest against the too large denomination of Tartars which is given by the Russians to

the Turkish races of the Caucasus, and will have they are Turkoumans or Turks. But what are the Turks themselves, if not Tartars? A fact confirmed by Mehemet-Ali, who said to a friend of mine: "The Turkish language, as being Tartar, is only beautiful because it borrowed the beauties of the Arabian and Persian languages."

In fact the Turkish language is only the Tartar enriched; as the Turk himself is only a Tartar improved by Circassian blood.

A Tartar understands a Turk and *vice versa*; but there is no writing in the Tartar language, whilst there is a written Turkish language which is spoken and esteemed by several Tartars of the Caucasus.

The Nogais settled in the Caucasus are issued from pure Tartar blood. Their name is derived from Nogai, a descendant of Zengis-khan, who, towards the latter part of the thirteenth century, founded a powerful empire on the north and east of the sea of Azov. He afterwards waged war against the Circassians, with the assistance of the Russians of Tmoutorakan, who acknowledged his supremacy.

The Kumans, themselves, who inhabited the Don* before the formation of the Kiptchak horde, were Tartars.†

After the conquest of Astrakhan, in 1557, a part of the Nogai proceeded to the Caucasus, drove away the Circassians and settled along Kouban, under the name of the "Black Nogais." When Crimea passed, in 1771, under the Russian domination, other Tartars came to join their countrymen of the Kouban; the population is now about 70,000.

* The mouths of that river have for a time remained in the possession of the Allani.

† See Rubruquis, edition of the "Geographical Society of Paris," 1839.

The Koumikls are found in Daghestan. A populous and commercial aoul called Andri, is the chief place of the country. The Russians have erected near that borough, the fortress Venzapnaia. There are about 20,000 Koumiks, and their country reaches to the Shamhalat* of Tarkou. The chiefs of both territories are in the service of Russia.

THE COSSACKS.

The first five *Stanitzas* of the Grebensky Cossacks were, in 1711, established by Peter I, along the Terek, under the names of the old and new Gladka, of Kourdoukoava, Stchedrin and Tcherwlennaia. In the following year, Peter founded, on the Soulak, the fort of the Holy Cross, which was razed in consequence of the treaty of Belgrade, and whose garrison was transferred to Kislair. Afterwards, Cossacks of the Don, a family from each Stanitza, and therefore called family Cossacks (Semeiny), were settled on the Terek.

In 1770, Cossacks of the Volga were also transferred, and they took the name of Cossacks of Mosdok, and were established between that town and Tchervlernaia.

It was after the treaty of Kutchuk-Kainardshi that the fortresses of Georgievsk, Ekaterinograd, Stavropol, Moscov, and Donsk were raised, and peopled with Cossacks of the Volga.

But, in 1794, the line of the Kouban was extended from Georgievsk to the redoubt Nedreman, and occupied by six new stanitzas. In the year 1798, the line of the Malka was covered with redoubts; in 1805, the Cossacks, called

* *Shamhal* is an Arabian dignity of the second order.

little Russian, peopled four new stanitzas, from Oustlabinsk to Kavkask. Then, in 1833, two regiments of Cossacks of Ukraine, out of the four which the nobility of that country had equipped at its own expense for the campaign of Poland, were established on the line, and thirty-two villagers became Cossacks of line. Finally, in 1837, 10,850 men were added to them. Now there are no less than 40,000 Cossacks, a sixth of whom follows the operations of the army. These Cossacks have adopted the Circassian costume and the kind of warfare of the Tcherkesses; in consequence of which, the mountaineers dread them more than they do the regular Russian troops.

It is near Kisplovodsk, that we find the prosperous colony of Karas, founded by Paterson. It was in the origin composed of Scotsmen, but now consists entirely of Germans.

MAGYARI.—This word evidently indicates that it was a Hungarian colony; but even the ruins of that town, which, according to Klaproth, was constructed by Arabs,* have entirely disappeared. The Russian Government employed them in the construction of the fort Ekaterinodar.

At a distance of twenty-five versts from Olou-Magyari, we find Kiss-Magyari or Burgund-Magyar, which was founded by General Skarjynski, formerly Governor of Astrakhan. He gave it the name of Burgund, on account of the wine which he grew there, and which has the taste of Chambertin, a wine of Burgundy, as is attested by the Empress Catherine II, who ordered the General to call the property, of which she had made him a present,

* *Magyar*, in the Arabian language, means an *emigrant*.

by that name. And we must add, that the vine-stock had in fact been brought there from Burgundy.

Vladimirovka, formerly a property of Savalier, belongs now to Mr. Rebrof, and is very prosperous; and in 1835,* it was able to repulse an attack of the Lesghians. M. Rebrof makes Champagne wine there, which is inferior to the ordinary wine of his vineyards.

The German colonies of the Trans-Caucasus were originated in 1818, and are composed of Suabian emigrants, whose number is now four thousand.

Helenendorf is the most populous, but is not prosperous. Katherinerfeld answers better; and the nearest to Tiflis is New Tiflis.

The Germans bring butter and the best vegetables to the market of Tiflis. Their countrymen of America may envy them the wine which they successfully grow, but not the Russian knout, to which they are subjected, though they are free from being enlisted.

* Travels in the Steppes, by Hommaire-de-Hell.

CHAPTER VII.

EXPLORATION OF THE CAUCASUS.

The March of the Ark—Prometheus—The Amazons of Herodotus—Expedition of the Argonauts—That of Alexander the Great—Mithridates—Strabo—Byzantins—Arabian Authors and their Knowledge of the Caucasus—Russian Princes—Invasions of the Mongols—Zengis-khan—Timour—Missionaries—Genoes—Works on the Caucasus.

The country watered by the Tigris and the Euphrates does not yet belong to Russia; the cradle of humanity has not yet been seized upon by the Moscovite empire; but the territory where tradition places the scenes of the flood is now under Russian domination.

Erivan, the capital of Russian Armenia, means, in that language, altogether; for Noah's ark was seen there entire. *Nakhitchewan* signifies the half, and *Echmiadzin*, a quarter. So those different denominations for different localities indicate the march of the ark.

Before reaching the Ararat, the ark is said to have rested on Elbrous; and the inhabitants of that country pretend it was while passing that it formed the two peaks that are still seen there.

The Greek fable has placed on the Caucasus one of its most important events. It tied Prometheus — guilty of having stolen the fire of heaven—on a rock of that chain,

That fable still exists in the memory of the inhabitants, who relate it with slight modifications.

Herodotus places the Amazons in the Caucasus. The Scythians, as he pretended, being unable to conquer the Amazons, came at last to terms with them, and united through marriage, the Sarmatians were the offspring of that union. In this, popular tradition agrees with the narrative of "the father of history," and relates that the Circassians first inhabited Tauris, and that having come to the Caucasus, and being unable to subdue the Amazons, they married them.

The manners of Circassian women corroborate this tradition; as in fact they share with their husbands the toils of war. Soumitian women are above all remarkable for their great courage; and at the taking of Akhoulgo, the Russians saw 400 women who, after having achieved prodigies of valour, preferred death rather than surrender, and threw themselves headlong from a precipice.

Herodotus had a full knowledge of the Caspian Sea; he indicated accurately its length and breadth, and stated that it was an isolated sea; whilst later, Ptolemy propogated the error that it was a lake connected with other waters.

Colchis was the Mingrelia of our own day; it was there the golden fleece existed, for the possession of which the Greeks undertook two expeditions, that of Phryxus and that of the Argonauts.* The first settled near Kingitetes, who resided at Kytais (Kuthais, the actual capital of Mingrelia). His children welcomed Jason, the leader of the Argonauts, who with his companions had landed at the mouth of the Phasis, and crossed the territory of Circe. According to

* Formerly gold was washed with a fleece or wool.

Herodotus, Jason carried off the treasures of Æetes and his daughter Medea, who was vainly claimed back from the Greeks; it was to avenge that injury that Darius Hystarpus became hostile to Greece.

The country of Circe was known to Homer; for he says "that Ulysses resided a long time with Queen Kirke, the sister of Æetes, in the island of Æa, on the shore of the Phasis."

Alexander, of Macedonia, on his way to India, subdued Georgia (Iberia); and Mtzkhetha was the only town which offered him a long and heroic resistance. Having taken it, he ordered the forts to be rased down to the ground, all the children to be killed up to fifteen years of age, and the inhabitants to be carried away prisoners. He appointed his lieutenant, Ason, governor of Iberia. However, Pharnarez, a descendant of the exterminated kings, having found a treasure, took arms against Ason, killed him, and thus reestablished the independence of his country.*

Mithridates V, the king of Pontus and Bosphorus, took possession of Colchis and Abkhasia, and had for tributaries Atag King of Iberia and Orazes king of Albania. Tigranes King of Armenia and his son-in-law assisted him in his war against the Romans. Defeated by Pompey, sixty-five years before the Christian era, he fled to the mountains of the Caucasus; whilst Athalus, governor of Colchis, adorned the triumph of Pompey.

The Romans established their domination over Georgia and Colchis; but they valued them very little, and were

* Vakhtang V, King of Karthli (1703 to 1721). r "The History of Georgia, compiled according to the Chronicles." There is, at the library of the Vatican, a Georgian copy of it. The work was translated into Russian by a Georgian; and Klaproth has given extracts of it in German.

satisfied with appointing their Kings chosen among the natives. That order of things lasted till the downfall of the Roman Empire.

The apostles, Simon the Canaanite, and Andrew preached Christianity in Abkhasia and Colchis, but with very little success it appears.

As Strabo had an uncle (Moaphernes); who was one of the prefects of Mithridates; that circumstance assisted him in obtaining accurate knowledge concerning the Caucasus.

"Iberia," says he "is inhabited by four different castes of men. The first, which supplies kings; the second, that of priests; the third, that of Pagans and husbandmen; and the fourth, of servants."

Strabo speaks of the Kerketæ, or Terutæ, who are the actual Circassians; of the Soanes, of Legæ, who are now known under the name of Lesghes; and of the Aorsi who probably are the Avares of the Caspian Sea. (*Aior* signifies man in the Scythian language.)

The Albanians were the neighbours of these two last tribes. The Aorsi traded with India, and assisted the Romans to destroy the Siraces.

The river Kuban is called Hypanis by Strabo, who, as Herodotus, places there the Sindi.

Moreover, Strabo calls the chain of mountains Koh-chaf or Ckasp (Caspian). The Pylæ Caspiæ of Plinius are the passage of Dariel, which Ptolemy calls Sarmatian portals. Some vestiges of a wall have in fact led to the supposition that a portal might have existed in that place, so easy to shut and defend that a single man could resist a whole army.

The ancients knew the river Kour, under the name of Cyrus; Koissu, under that of Cassius; and Shorak, under that of Apsarus. The actual Rhion was the Glaucus of

Strabo, the Surium of Plinius, and the Rheone of Procopius. With regard to the Phasis of the ancients, it is now called Kvirila.

The wine of Kahetia was known by Strabo, who praised it.

The Romans believed that the Cyrus and the Rhion were navigable, and that the trade of the Indies was carried on that way. But it is certain that those rivers could only bear ships at their mouth.

Nothing could be more scanty than the documents of the Byzantine writers concerning the Caucasus. However, Constantine knew the Abkhases and the Zikhes. Procopius gave the name of Goths to the Allans; and Eustathius said that their name signified mountaineers.

Massoudi, Ebn-Haoucal, and Iacout are our principal Arabian sources; but the Arabs, being inclined to exaggeration and credulity, must be read with caution.

In order to express their notions in few words, we will state that they call the Caucasus Cabokh, a word which resembles very much the K'habgokh of the Armenians, and which is also found in Kabardha, which the Circassians designate under the name of Aghlo-Cabac.

The province of Shirvan is so called after the name of the Persian prince, whom king Nouschirevan invested with its administration. Cosroe confirmed several Caucasian princes in their possessions and gave them the title of Shah: Herarzanshah, Filanshah, Tabarseranshah, Kharisshanshah, and Transhah, were the Princes of Nodi and Zerengueran.

Kharisshanshah was the Prince of the Lekzes. In the country of the Leighes, the Arabs have mentioned two towns, Takhar and Sinass, saying that the inhabitants of them

fed on *Iult*, which resembles barley, but has the taste of wheat.

Some of the Lekzes were called Doudanis.

Iran, a province of the Caucasus, was between Derbend and Shirvan.

Arran, on the contrary, designated the country which extends from the Aras to Derbend; but now it only designates the country situated between the Aras and the Kour.

The Caspian Sea was, at that time, called the Sea of the Khazars; but it bore also the name of Shirvan, of Guilan, and of other provinces in its neighbourhood.

Derbend was called the town of the gates: El-bah el Ewab,* the town with the iron gates.

Kesora Nouschirevan, in order to protect his states against the invasion of the Khazares, of the Allani, and other barbarians, is said to have constructed through the Caucasus a wall forty forsensks long, and provided with iron gates and towers at the places which were crossed by roads. There were twelve, and the guarding them was entrusted to various tribes.

Actual Georgia was Djorzan, of which the Arabs took possession in the year 650; and Tiflis remained in their power until the year 514, when the Gourdjes seized upon it, and formed Gourdjistan or Georgia. The Gourdges were considered as Khazares.

The Arabs were acquainted with the Abkhases, who were Christians, and tributaries to the Allani and the Khalifs.

The Savortians on the river Beradje, called now Bortschale, the Somtakhas or Somkhites, and the Sanarians

* *Bab*, in Arabian, means *door, gate, defile.*

are Armenian tribes; the first having given their name to formidable war axes. In general, the Georgians give the name of Somekhis to the Armenians. With regard to the Sanarians, they inhabited the country of Dzanar.

The Arabs attributed to them an Arabian origin, but Ptolemy had heard of them before the time of the conquests of Mahomet's followers.

The Shekinis inhabited on the Kur; and the town of Cabalah, in the district of Shirvan, was a haunt of robbers.

The present town of Tarkou was formerly called Samander, and under that name was the capital of the Khazares. Itil* is now invested with that title.

But as that country is not included in the Caucasus, we think it will be sufficient to refer to Ibn-Fazan, and to the work of Mr. Fraehn, where interesting details concerning that people will be found.

However, as the Chazars have played a great part on the Kur and the Araxes have occupied Armenia, and waged sanguinary wars against the Arabs and the Persians, we think it proper to state that their kings reigned but did not govern. The government was in the hands of a Regent, who himself designated the King's successor. The court was Israelite; however, there were among the Chazars as many Mussulmans as Pagans and Christians.

Zilan was a Chozarean town, but the title of Zilanshah belonged to the king of Serir.

* *Itil*, in the Turkish language, a river, was particularly the name of the Volga, which was called *Oulong-Itil*, or the large river. At the same time, it was also the residence of the Khan of the Khazars, situated at seven days' journey from the mouth of the river.

Near Serir was situated the country called Zirhguiran, a word which, in Persian, means manufacturers of coats of mail.

Reineggs recognizes their descendants in the Courchschis, excellent armourers, who pretend to be of an European origin.*

On the north of Serir was the dwelling of the Goumiks, the actual Koumikes, who were Jews till the eighteenth century.

The capital of the Allani was called Magar, and their king kept an army of 30,000 horsemen.

The Caschakis are the inhabitants of the Casatchia of Constantine Porphyro-gonetes, or the Tcherkesses, so properly called. The Arabs admired their beauty, and praised the tala, a kind of linen which the Caschakis manufactured, and a garment of which cost as many as ten dinars.

Oleg, a Russian prince, forbade the Severians and the Radimitchians, Sclavonic tribes, to pay tribute to the Chozars. Sviatosla made, in 965, war against the Chozarves, took from them Belaia-vess, which had been constructed by Greek engineers, and sacked Semender.†

A short time after, the Russians seized upon Taman, or Tamatarga, a Chazar town on the Bosphorus, which they called Tmoutorokan. In 1022, Mstislar waged war against the Cassoks (Caschaki), and in 1023 he rendered them his tributaries. Afterwards the same Cassoks fought under his standard against the great Duke Jaroslav, his brother.

In 1222 the Mongols, for the first time, made an irrup-

* Reineggs. Beshreibung des Kaucasus, p. 107, s. f.

† Ebn-Haucal Man. of Leyden,—p. 145.

tion on the Caucasus, and one of the chiefs of Zengiskhan's army received the submission of the Prince of Georgia, who resided in Tauris; and the plain of Moughan became the habitual theatre of the Mongols' campaigns. Moreover, another lieutenant of the Khan, called Djoutchi, passed over the Caucasus by going along the defile of Derbend, and subdued the Allani.

In the following century, another mighty warrior arose among the Mongols; in 1386, Timour, whose name means iron, received in the plain of Karabagh the submission of the prince of Georgia, who was allowed to remain on his throne only because he renounced Christianity.

The prince of Shirvan brought him nine times nine presents, nine being a sacred number with the Mongols.

Taherten, prince of Armenia, dared to resist him, and for the first time, after a siege of nineteen days, the fortress of Van fell into the hands of the Mongols. Its brave defenders were precipitated into an abyss, and its walls were overthrown—a laborious task in which 10,000 men were engaged.

In 1399, Timour, on his return from Persia, marched against Melek Gourgin, the Prince of Georgia, who had refused to deliver up to him the fugitive Prince of Bagdad. Melek Gourgin had fortified himself in the mountains; and to conquer him, Timour resorted to the same means which he had successfully employed in order to effectuate his passage through the chain of India. He ordered cords one hundred and fifty metres long to be made, and to be fastened to baskets in which soldiers were placed, and by which they were descended near the asylum of the Circassians. Then the Monglian soldiers, either with their arrows drove the Circassians away, or set their places of

38267

refuge on fire.* Timour, having thus subdued the mountaineers, had all the forts rased and the inhabitants killed.

According to Strabo and the Arabs, who wrote after him, there are in the Caucasus seventy-two different tribes, as many as are contained in Russia, the state which offers the greatest variety of inhabitants.

In our own days, the number of Circassian tribes is still very great, and the fact is only accounted for through the supposition that the mountains of the Caucasus served as a refuge to the remains of all the different migrations. Thus it is also probable that a remnant of the Crusaders who were beaten back, sheltered themselves in the Caucasus; and the immense quantity of arms, which at that period began to be found among the Circassians, would corroborate the fact, unless it were pretended that the mountaineers brought them from the Ottomans.

The Christian missionaries who at different periods repaired to the Mongols, the Chinese, and the Hindoos, have passed through different parts of the Caucasus, and have transmitted to us the knowledge they have gathered; but the information received through them is very inferior to that derived from local surveys and from the Armenian and Georgian chronicles.

However, the Genoese having established colonies in Crimea, extended, through Astrakhan, their trade with Persia, and worked for their own account the mines of Mingrelia. But, in 1475, Caffa fell into the power of the Turks, and thus disappeared the connexion between the East and Europe.

* Cherefeddin. Hist. de Timur Bey. Translated into French, by Petit de la Croix. L. x, ch. 8, p. 242.

We are to mention here the relations of *Guillaume de Rubruquis*, of *Arcuangelo Lamberti*, on Mingrelia, of *George Interiano*, of Genoa; and the work of the Roman *Aldo Manutio, delta vitta de Zychi, Venetia*, 1853.

The domination of the Turks and of the Persians in the Caucasus did not supply Europe with any knowledge concerning that country. We will devote a private chapter to the progress of the Russians: and now we have to mention the travels which have thrown light on that country.

We place in the first rank *J. A. Guldenstadt*, Reisen durch Russland und im Caucasischen Gebirge. Herausgegeben von Pallas, II Theile, Petersburg, 1787-1791.

Dr. J. Reineggs' Allgemeine historish geographische Beschreibung des Caucasus, II Theile a Petersburg.

Pallas. Reise nach den sudlichen Statt haltershaften Russlands, II Bde, St. Peters.

Klaproth. Reise am Kaukasus, II, St. Peters.

Ct. Potocki. Voyages dans les steppes d'Astrakhan et du Caucase publiés par Klapoth.

Taitbout de Marigny. Voyages à la Mer Noire, dans l'ouvrage de Potocki.

Bell. Two years residence among the Circassians.

Spencer. Travels in the Western Caucasus, London, 1838, 2 vols.

Dubois de Montpereux. Voyage au tour du Caucase, 3 vols, Paris, 1238.

S. C. Besse. Voyage en Crimée, au Caucase, etc. Paris, 1838.

Karl Koch. Reise nach dem Kaukasischen Isthmus, in dea Iahren, 1836-38. Stuttgard, 1843.

Hommaire de Hell. Voyage dans les steppes du midi de la Russie, 3 vols., Paris, 1844.

Moritz Wagner. Der Kaukasus und das Land der Kosaken, Leipzig, 1850, 2nd edition.

Ditto. Reise nach Kolchis.

Fr. Bodenstedt. Die Völker des Kaukasus. Fft., 1849.

G. L. Ditson. Circassia, or a Tour to the Caucasus, London, 1850.

CHAPTER VIII.

PRODUCTIONS OF THE CAUCASUS.

Mineral Kingdom — Vegetable Kingdom — Animal Kingdom — Climate — Industry of the Inhabitants.

OPINIONS concerning the existence of gold in the mountains and rivers of the Caucasus are divided. Some believe in it, and others are incredulous on the subject. We are rather inclined to side for the affirmative. Besides, it is certain that the ancients found gold there; but they had neither our knowledge, nor our means of working mines. Thus in Spain, the mines which were abandoned by the Carthagenians, are now successfully worked by Europeans; and English machines produce those results far superior to those which the slaves and the prisoners of war of the Romans could obtain for their masters.

The Greek fable pretends that the gold sand of Colchis, the actual Mingrelia, were guarded by ants, who inflicted a mortal sting on those who ventured to collect that sand. The ants of the fable might have been real hyenas, which formed their dens with aurifetous earth, and defended any approach to them with their well known ferocity. Nor would it be improbable if some hunter, pursuing any of

those beasts, had at length discovered gold; for, it is well known that the discovery of the richest mines in Siberia was owing to a chance of that description.

Hunters, it is said, having killed some heath-cocks, discovered particles of gold in their intestines; thereupon, they returned to the place where those birds used to brood, and they found there gold. Such was the origin of the discovery of the richest mines in Siberia.

With regard to the mines of Mingrelia, they have been worked by Genoese, and at their own expense.

But a fact which is not to be overlooked is, that continually and from different parts of the Caucasus, a kind of sand which has the appearance of gold, but which is only catergold, is sent to Tiflis: however, a better chance may yet be expected.

At eighty versts of Tiflis are found the copper mines of Alwersk, and at twelve versts from that place those of Shambludsk, which yield three hundred puds;* but the silver mines of Akhtal have been abandoned.

The mountains of the Caucasus are of a volcanic nature; and though the volcanoes have long been extinguished, we find on the Kasbek, for instance, Plutonic productions. Porphyry and granite form the nucleus of the chief summit. Sulphur is found in abundance at the foot of the Elbrous; and the Sounitians, who inhabit that country, elaborate it as well as saltpetre, and manufacture gunpowder, which they clandestinely sell to the Circassians, who are at war with Russia.

No salt is found in the western part of the Caucasus, but a small quantity is gathered near Kisliar, and in the neighbourhood of the peninsula of Absheron.

* A pud has 40 lib.

It is the government that works out the rock salt of Koulp, in the province of Armenia.

The mineral waters of the Caucasus are more and more recognised to be beneficial, and every year their reputation is increasing, especially the sulphur waters of Piatigorsk and the saline waters of Kislovodsk.

Already, before the arrival of the Russians, the indigenous were in the habit of making use of them. They called them *Narzana*, that is, the spirit of heroes, from *Nar*, hero, and *zana*, spirit.

Having been driven away, the natives attempted to fill them up with stones, but the water has appeared again at a short distance, and the Russians have solidly established themselves there. So the same place, where, in the time of Catherine, only a few wretched hovels were seen, now is enlivened by a town which offers the pleasures, resources and luxuries of civilised life;—we speak of Piatigorsk.

There are also several lakes in Armenia, the water of which is very efficacious for certain complaints, but which is not fit for drinking.

The Caucasus is, in general, one of the finest countries in the world. It vies with Switzerland for the imposing majesty of its sites, and with Italy for the beauty of its climate. It no doubt will attract as many tourists as those two countries do, when war has ceased to devastate it, and safety has succeeded the alarms from which even bathers are not free, and which imposes on travellers the necessity of having an escort on the most frequented roads.

The Emperor Nicholas, on visiting that country in 1837, exclaimed,—"I now understand better than ever the words in Genesis,—'God said, Let there be light, and there was light.'" In fact, the sun shines on the Caucasus more

splendidly than it does in any other part of the Russian empire.

If there be a country where men may be seized with an enthusiastic adoration of the Creator, it is undoubtedly the Caucasus; yet, the indigenous worship mountains, and do not open their minds to the light of true religion.

Vegetation especially displays there extraordinary richness and beauty. Antediluvian woods inspire you with a profound respect for the greatness of that nature. There are, in Daghestan, walnut trees under the foliage of which two companies of soldiers may encamp; and there stands near Erivan a plane tree, hollow inside, offering a room, the dimension of which is seven feet and a half. People go there to play at cards or to take tea.

The most beautiful and rare flowers enamel the meadows, and the most esteemed plants grow along the rivers.*

Wines and silk are the two productions of the Caucasus which are destined to acquire the greatest importance. The province of Kakhetia produces alone 2,000,000 *Vedros*† of excellent wine, but which offers, and even in a higher degree, the same inconvenience as Spanish wines, except sherry. It is not put into casks or vases, but is kept and carried in skins, which gives it the disagreeable taste of the naphtha with which they are laid over. But that process is necessary to preserve the wine. However the natives are not displeased with that taste.

It is said that those wines preserve from the gout; in this they are quite different from some Swiss wines, which give it.

Imeratia is, perhaps, the native country of the vine; and stocks are there of the size of the arm.

* See the Memoirs of the Academy of St. Petersburgh. Vol. viii.

† Pails.

The cocoons of the silk-worms reach to a dimension of eight centimetres; and experienced men of Lombardy have been engaged to go there for the purpose of rearing silk-worms.*

The Circassians sow Indian corn, cultivate rice, and make bread with kuruss. The product of their tobacco is valued at 15,000 puds; and their exportation of madder amounts to 80,000 puds. Excellent saffron is gathered in the district of Bakou.

The Greeks gave to the Caucasus the name of Hippicon, on account of the numerous horses produced in that country. The Caucasian race of horses is much sought for by the Cossacks, and highly valued by Russians and Turks; it vies with the Arabian for its swiftness and the facility with which it bears fatigue, requiring at the same time but little food. The Circassians are very partial to Caucasian horses, and treat them with a particular care. They never use them for the plough; oxen are employed for that task, which they consider degrading for their war companions. They feed their horses on wheat, which they grow in a larger quantity than any other grain. They make with mare's milk a favorite beverage called koumys.

Camels render great services to the Russian army. They are also very useful to the Armenians, the Georgians, and the Persians of Bakou. There is a species of white camels.

Shamois are also found there; and the mountains

* Count Brono-Bronski has discovered the art of crossing silk-worms, a process through which he obtains silk of a splendid whiteness. Baron Mejendorf has made him brilliant offers for the purpose of securing for Russia the benefit of his invention. But the Polish emigrant has refused through patriotism, and has offered his secret to the India Company.

abound with he-goats and kids, as well as with a kind of izards or gazelles.

Circassian bulls have long and bent round horns; they are small, but agile and strong.

Mr. Eichwald pretends, and in the notes which he has added to the travels of Professor de Vilna, Klaproth confirms the assertion that there are in the Caucasus mules issued from the crossing of cows with asses. Can such a statement be admitted? However, in order not to contradict those two learned men, let us place their assertion among the—*it is said.* And we can safely do so, since the pretended fact has never been any more repeated.

The wild goat (rupi capra) or Touri belongs especially to those mountains. In order to escape hunters, it precipitates itself from the top of rocks and falls on the tip of its horns, which, as well as its neck, are extraordinarily strong. Worked into a bowl, each horn holds a bottle of wine, which the indigenous often empty by a single draught. The wild goat is longer and bigger but not higher than a calf.

The Circassians keep numerous flocks of sheep, the flesh of which is their principal food. With regard to the wool, it is manufactured into pretty good cloth.

Heaths, underwoods, and plains, are filled with exquisite game, such as pheasants and red partridges. The mountaineers, who are not acquainted with small shot, and make use only of balls, are necessarily bad huntsmen, and often wonder at the nicety with which the Russians hit the game. So the vultures and eagles, that find on those high mountains a dwelling worthy of them, are, in consequence of the mountaineers being bad shots, left with ample prey.

Black swans, which are erroneously believed to be found but in Australia, exist also in the Caucasus. Carnivorous beasts are there likewise rather plentiful, especially jackals and wolves. Bears are often found eating the grapes of the inhabitants; and the Cossacks cut off their paws, with which they make an excellent dish. Hyenas are met in the neighbourhood of Persia; and even tigers advance from India as far as that region.

The Caspian Sea is rich in fish, especially in sturgeons and caviar. But the Kouban is the most plentiful of all rivers. Salmon trouts and ordinary trouts abound in the torrents of the mountains.

The Caucasus offers very opposite climates. A winter of Sweden prevails on the summits, whilst a summer of Naples is enjoyed at Bakou. The spring is very short in Georgia; and the climate of Mingrelia is pernicious even to the indigenous. While travelling you meet, on the same day, both the beginning of vegetation on the top of mountains, and the harvest in the valleys.

The Georgians manufacture silk stuffs, which, under the name of Tarmalama, are highly valued, and which are employed to make morning gowns for ladies, and dressing gowns for rich men.

The carpets, after the oriental taste, increase also in sale in proportion as they are made of a superior quality.

The richest and best tempered arms are manufactured amongst the Circassians, and their daggers are held in high estimation.

CHAPTER IX.

THE TOWNS OF THE CAUCASUS.

Tiflis—Gori—Kutais—Redout-Kalé—Souchoum-Kalé—Anapa — Erivan—Stavropol—Bakou—Derbend—Kouba.

According to the Georgian chronology, Tiflis was built in 455 of the Christian era, by King Vakhtang; but it may be the *Tobel* or Toubal of Ezekiel.

The old town extended along the right bank of the Kour, and was ruined by the Persian Shah, Aga Mohamed Chan. The new town, which rises on the left bank, exists only since the arrival of the Russians.

Its name of Tiphlissi is derived from the hot springs and mineral waters which flow under a bridge, at the entrance of the town.

Tiflis contains 30,000 inhabitants; it may be compared to Prague for its general aspect, and to Cairo for the concourse and active life, of which it is the theatre. The streets are not so fine as the places or squares. There are forty-three churches, but Georgian and Armenian cupolas are conic, and not round like those of Russian churches.

The palace of the general governor, in the new town, is a fine edifice; it was built with the arches of the ancient

palace of the kings of Georgia; and the gardens which belong to it are, on Sundays, open to the public. The theatre, which was begun some time ago, is no doubt completed. There is a botanical garden, but it requires great improvement to deserve its name. The bazaar, which is a rendezvous of a numerous population, composed of many races, is very attractive and excites curiosity in the highest degree; there you meet the Georgian and the Armenian, the Imeretian and the Circassian, the Russian warrior and the Tartar, all distinguished from one another by their various costumes. There Europe and Asia intermix through commerce, elbow one another, exhibiting the striking contrast of their physiognomy and language. The Turk, the Jew who speaks Spanish, and the Colon who talks German, carry on there, also, their commercial transactions. The artisans exercise their trade in the street, by the side of the merchants who sell their products.

The Georgian woman, with black eyes, a curved nose and painted cheeks, with or without a Tchadra (veil) looks, seen at a distance, more beautiful than when surveyed closely, on the terrace of a house than in the street.

Mistress Pfeiffer, in her "Journey Round the World," is right in saying that Persian harems are finer than Turkish harems, though peopled with Circassian women; in fact, the Persian woman is, through her gracefulness, the French woman of the East; whilst the Circassian woman is, through the regularity of her features, to the utmost the Italian woman.

Russian morals have invaded Tiflis, and the virtue of Georgian women is not the better for it. We ought not to wonder if the conquests of Russian officers, in the society of Tiflis, were the real cause that prevents them from being

victorious in Daghestan. A people of licentious morals is little calculated to subdue other nations.

We must here state that wood is not wanting in Georgia, but that it is scarce in Armenia and near Bakou. We are also going to make our readers acquainted with the method employed by the inhabitants of the Caucasus to warm themselves; stoves are hardly known to them, and chimneys are not either very common. That being the case, a vase filled with ignited embers is placed under a table covered with a carpet; the persons who enter the house sit round that table, and their feet are thus warmed by the heat which emanates from that warmer. As the shoes worn by the indigenous are very light, they are easily penetrated by heat; but that manner of expelling dampness is liable to engender complaints pretty often.

On the road from Tiflis to Kutais one finds first, *Mzcheta* the ancient capital of Iberia, and next, Gori; which was formerly a more important town than Tiflis. Gori is situated on the Liachwa, whose water is so much the more the object of praise, as that of the other rivers is bad and unwholesome. Suram is the Surium of Plinius.

There is, concerning the women of Gori, a legend which circulates through the country, and which, perhaps, deserves to be related, as it gives an insight into the turn of mind peculiar to the inhabitants.

"Allah" the legend says, "wishing to people his celestial harem with the most beautiful daughters of men, commissioned an Imam, who was a good judge of beauty, to bring him forty of the handsomest daughters of the earth. The Imam betook himself to Frankistan and to the country of the Inglis, where having seized upon the daughter of the king, he carried her off. The English king

pursued him, but Allah, protecting his servant, threw dirt into the eyes of the pursuer, and stopped him.

"From England the Imam went to Germany, where he selected many pretty girls; but having reached Gori, he fell in love with one of the beauties destined for the celestial harem, and stayed there with all of them. Allah punished with death the treachery of the Imam. With regard to all those beautiful girls, they remained at Gor and contributed to the procreation of a handsome race."*

Kutais is the chief town of Immeretia, and is situated on the Rhion; it is remarkable for the antiquities which are found in its neighbourhood, but some of them owe their renown to supposition; for instance, in the convent of *Gelati*, travellers are shown the sepulchre of King David, and half of the iron gate which that monarch is said, by the inhabitants, to have carried off from Derbend; that belief maintains its ground, though the Coptic inscription engraven on the gate bears the date of the time of the Emir of Tavin, and states that it was brought from *Ani*, the ancient capital of Armenia. That half gate is thirteen feet high and six broad.

There is in Mingrelia no place which deserves the name of town. In fact, Sukdide, already mentioned by Lamberti, which is the winter residence, and Isalchino the summer dwelling of the princes, called new Dadiani, are merely poor villages.

Redoubt Kale is a bad sea port, which was opened in 1827. The Russian Government pays annually to the princes of Mingrelia 2,300 silver rubles, for the privilege of trading there.

* Tausend und ein Tag im Orient, v. Fr. Bodensteidt.

Poti, which is situated at the mouth of the Rhion, is not a better port than Redoubt Kale.

Sukhum Kale, situated on the territory of Abchasia, is better. Taken by the Russians in 1810, it was, by the treaty of 1811, to be, with other parts, restored to Turkey. But as war assumed, in 1812, a more favourable aspect, counter-orders were sent not to deliver up those ports, but they arrived too late, except for Sukhum Kale, which was not restored, but detained by the Russians, who are still in possession of it.

Isoukssa, the capital of Abchasia, is of no importance.

Anapa was built by the Turks in 1784. Six years after that fort was stormed by General Bibikof, who was repulsed. But in 1791 General Goudovitch took it, after a siege of six weeks; and, on the 29th of April, 1807, the Russian squadron, under the orders of Traversey and Pastoshkin, carried it off in one single day. It was afterwards retaken in 1809, and, for the last time, in 1828, by Prince Menshikoff. Anapa, by the treaty of Adrianople became definitely the property of Russia. Under the Turks that place was the market for Circassian slaves.

Erivan is the capital of Russian Armenia. Its fortress was built by the Turks in 1582, and taken in 1604 by the Persians, who rendered it so strong that the Turks failed against it in 1615, and the Russians, under Zizianof, in 1804. However, in 1827, Paskiewitch was more fortunate, being favoured by the Armenians, who, on account of the conformity of their religion, were desirous of passing under the domination of the Russians. As a bullet happened to fall on the cathedral, where the inhabitants had taken refuge, they were seized with superstition, refused to defend themselves any more, and surrendered.

There were two Armenian churches in crockery ware, of different colours and of extraordinary beauty. The Russians converted one of them into a Russian church, and the other into an arsenal. The ancient harem of the Sardars of Erivan has been transformed into barracks. And in the same place, where formerly odalisks rested, amidst perfumes and flowers, Russian soldiers emit the odour which is peculiar to them.

The town itself is dirty and ill-built; but from the castle one obtains a magnificent sight of the surrounding country. There are in that castle very rich rooms, adorned with looking glasses, and the portraits of the Shahs of Persia.

Stavropol, the capital of the Cis-Caucasus, was founded in 1777; but it was only in 1785 that it was raised to the rank of a town. It stands on a healthy and high spot, which towers over the steeps, and protects the territory situated between Kouma and Kouban. Two fairs are, every year, held in that town; and the exchange of merchandise which takes place is valued at nearly 2,000,000 sti.

There is, near the town, a prison, where all the evil-doers of the province are sent; and they are made to work in open day, many of them being loaded with chains.

Stavoropol is situated on the river Atchile, and surrounded with Kalmucks, nomade Nogais, and Cossacks' Stanitzas. The garden, which is a part of the hotel of the governor, owes its beauty to General Emmanuel. That town is calculated to become important, but it is not yet so.

The government of Stavropol is composed of four districts—Stavropol, Piatigorsk, Mosdok, and Kisliar.

Mosdok, built in 1764, on the frontiers of Kabardah, contains 4,500 inhabitants, and is situated on the Terek.

Kisliar was built under the Empress Anna, at seventy versts from the Caspian Sea. Its name is derived from an arm of the Terek, and means, in Tartar, "a drowned girl." Kisliar contains 10,000 inhabitants, and its commerce is rather considerable.

Piatigorsk is known on account of its mineral waters, of which we shall speak in another place.

Georgievsk has lost its importance since 1822, when the seat of the government was transferred to Stavropol, and also since Piatigorsk has become the chief place of the district. Mosdok has also considerably lost since the time when the highway of Teflis has begun to pass through Stavropol.

Baku, or Badkou, means "mountain of the wind;" in fact it is exposed to an unbearable north wind, and its climate is generally bad. That town contains 800 houses, 4,000 inhabitants, and a garrison of 400 soldiers. Its district is composed of 35 villages.

The fortress of Baku, which was erected by Peter I., is pretty strong, and was formerly washed by the sea, which has considerably diminished there. The port is good, and the bazaar finer than that of Derbend. The Tower of the Maids (Madchenthurm) is rather remarkable, and was built to oppose the incursions of the Truchmens of the eastern shore. The two shores of the Caspian Sea were formerly united by a neck of land which divided it into two lakes, and went through the island of Nargin; but, in our own days, the sea is very deep, at least around that island. It appears also that in ancient times there existed a town called Shabah, which has disappeared.

Bakou carries on a considerable trade with Persia, from which it receives silk-stuffs, carpets, and wines of old Sha-

machi. Those wines resemble those of the south of France of a superior quality; and their making deserves more skill than is bestowed.

Russian products are very dear at Baku, but fruit there is excessively cheap. Grapes are sold at a penny a pound; and a pail of wine is obtained for four shillings. There is a deficiency of vegetables; and for want of meadows, milk food is scarce and of a bad quality. Naphtha is abundant in the neighbourhood, and the roofs of houses are laid over with it, but it does not always protect them against the perpetual rain that falls in the spring. Naphtha is also burned instead of candles, and its smell is disagreeable. As no wheat is sown, the *Tchuraki* make bad bread.

At twelve versts from Baku, and on the peninsula of Absheron, there is an encampment of a tribe of fire-worshippers, who are Indians. They keep a white-yellow fire issuing from under ground. It is free from the inconvenience that belongs to naphtha, and appears to be carbonic gas (Wasserstofgass). Flames are seen burning on the walls of their temple; and in the interior, beside a large focus of fire, there are little flames which strew the ground floor. If atmospheric air is compressed, and fire brought into contact with it, an explosion, which could blow up a hut, is produced. The Indians make use of a well to give that spectacle to visitors, and they produce a roaring noise.*

Derbend contains 1,800 houses and 26,000 inhabitants.

* Besides the fire-worshippers of India, there is at Andi a colony of Persians who follow the same religious rite. They obtain fire through the rubbing of small sticks against the inside of a round hole in two pieces of wood superpoised one over the other. The Persians call fire *aghan*; the Russians, *ogone*; and the Arabs, *nur*.

Its climate is deadly to the Russian garrison, which every year loses the half of its *personnel* through fevers and contagious diseases. The inhabitants are for the most part Tartars.

The town is rather picturesque, extends along a narrow neck of the sea up to the mountains, is surrounded with a wall, and provided with a citadel. The palace of the shahs is in ruin, and there are *medcheds* to which their minarets give rather a fine appearance.

KOUBA, on the river of the same name (Koubatchai), is the chief place of the most important district in Daghestan. That district is composed of about three hundred villages.

CHAPTER X.

Ruins and Convents—Disastrous Climates—Mortality in the Russian Garrisons—The Means to Prevent it—The Temple of Pitzunder—Mzketha —Uplotichoi—The Convent of the Capuchins at Kutaio.

It has been remarked that, through a fatality inherent in things here below, the finest climates are unhealthy. On the other hand, the countries that are the most happily situated, are the worst ruled. Those persons who find a consolation for every evil, pretend that if things were otherwise, paradise would exist on earth; I doubt it, but I believe that hell is very near the spot where the seat of paradise has been.

Hell is on the shores of the Black Sea, thanks to the epidemics that reign there; thanks also to Nicholas, who has chosen it for a place of exile. The unfortunate beings who have been banished there are continually saying, that they would prefer Siberia to the enchanting regions of Colchis; in fact, men are not killed by cold, as they are by an atmosphere filled with pestilential miasma; so Nicholas knows well what he is about when he banishes his enemies to a part where no one dies a natural death. It is, indeed, a heartrending spectacle to see Russian soldiers wander,

like shadows, under magnificent vines and fig trees. The pine trees, which surround the barracks of the garrison of Pitzunda, exercise undoubtedly a baneful influence upon the health of soldiers. The stagnant water at the mouth of the Chopi produces a fatal effect on the garrison of Redoubt-Kale; it is intended to turn off these waters, but Pote, at the mouth of the Rhion, has not become more salubrious since the forests have been cleared. This evil is owing to the marshes which surround the town, and to the unwholesome food given to soldiers: fevers rage specially in the months of July and August. The Turks, during those baneful months, took care to remove their garrisons to another locality. The Russian Government shows less humanity, and cares not for the destruction of a third of the garrisons. Its culpable indifference is explained thus:—the men of whom the garrisons are composed have, for the most part, committed political or disciplinary offences, which they expiate through death.

The *Scoptzi*, a sect of Russian heretics who mutilate themselves that they may not yield to carnal temptations, are very numerous among the exiles, and their eunuchs' faces complete the repulsive picture which is offered in the hospitals of the Russian forts in that part of the Caucasus.

They have made many proselytes among the sailors of the Sea of Azov. The Scoptzi constitute almost all the garrison of Pitzunda, which consists of 250 men, and their habitations are remarkable for their cleanliness.

The temple of Pitzunda was erected in the year 500, by the Emperor Iustinianus. Like all Greek churches, it is in the shape of a cross; half of it is of brick, and the other of free-stone; its cupola, with round painted windows, is supported by four immense columns, sixty feet high. The

verdure which covers all this imposing edifice gives it an old appearance, if it does not add to its beauty.

In the vestibule and the interior are seen, in fresco, representations of the Crucifixion, the Descent from the Cross, the Resting, and the Virgin Mary at the feet of our Lord. The nave is separated from the wings by columns, which support a gallery. In the chapel there is an altar of white marble, supporting a cross; the fresco and the columns of that part are in a ruinous state; they nevertheless are still a fair specimen of the taste of Greek artists. The wall which surrounds the temple, and the remains of other edifices, allow us to suppose that on that site there was also a convent.

There is already a priest to officiate in the temple, and if he is not an exile, we hope that the money, destined for divine service in the temple, will be properly employed.

The most ancient cathedral in Georgia is that of Sweti-Tzhnoveli, at Mzketha, the ancient residence of the kings of Georgia. Its date is of the third century, and it owes its existence to King Miriam. It has undergone several demolitions and reconstructions. Its shape is also that of a cross, and its cupola belongs to the Ionian style.

Uplostsichos, the town of grottoes, owes its name to a village situated near Gori, and is the best preserved of all the ruins of the Caucasus. It was founded at the time when the Armenians were pagans, and when the Georgians worshipped trees. The construction belonged to the Persian style, but the inscriptions that have been discovered there are some in the Arabian and others in the Armenian language. The grottoes of the rich are large, and admirably well wrought.

Uplostsichos is very superior to a subterranean town

which exists in the Crimea, on the mountain of Tepekeftman. There are vaults and columns found there skilfully executed.

There is at Kutais a convent of Capuchins, which cannot long resist the effects of the bad-will of the Russian government. In fact, Russian authorities try to work its ruin, by surrounding it with every kind of obstacle and vexation. With regard to the Pope, who ought to protect it, his influence is not felt at such a distance. For instance, the Catholic priests are forbidden to make proselytes, and to convert the natives, whether they are pagans or mussulmans. Besides, there are in the convent only two monks, and they live pretty well.

The convent of Khopi is the burying place of the Dadiani, princes of Mingrelia. An archimandrite is the superior of the convent; and the few monks who live under his authority belong to the order of St. Basil, and follow the Grecorian ritual.

CHAPTER XI.

PROGRESS AND REVERSES OF THE RUSSIANS.

Tmsutorakan—Tjumen — Acquisition of Imertia — Peter I — Catherine's Conquests—Union of Glorgia — Zizianof — Fermolof—Rosin—Glorin—Neidnard—Prince Woronsol—Zatlexants—Tamatarkha.

THE successors of Mithridates were expelled from the kingdom of the Bosphorus by Russian princes, who remeained in the possession of that part of the Caucasus, till the arrival of the Huns.

The Russian prince, Sviatoslav, founded Tmoutorokan; and the Russians maintained themselves in the west Caucasus till they were expelled from it by the Polovtzi, towards the beginning of the eleventh century. It was only in the sixteenth century that the Russians appeared again in the Caucasus; but this time they came from the opposite side to the mouth of the Volga.

The Circassians fought under the standard of Ivan IV., before Astrakhan, and in Livonia. It was in 1568 that the Russians founded the town of Tjumen, on an arm of the Terek, at the place where it falls into the Caspian Sea; but, two years after, on the request of the Sultan

Selim, who was incited by the Tartars, they left it, and the Cossacks, who were called after the name of the town, Terki, were allowed to take possession of it. Towards the end of the sixteenth century the Russians built the fort Koiza. In 1604 they were expelled from Daghestan by the Turks, and the commander, Boutourlin, was assassinated. However, Terki remained faithful to Russia. It was under the Vojewode Golovin, who struggled against the influence of the false Demetrius, in the province of Astrakhan.*

A Dutch engineer, Klausen, sent by Alexis Mikhailowitch, fortified Terki; and a Scotchman, Thomas Bayly, completed his works in 1670.

In 1711 the Grebensky Cossacks obtained from Peter I. the authorisation of settling on the Terek, and they formed the first five Stanitzas.†

By the treaty of 1792 Persia yielded to Russia the eastern and southern coasts of the Caspian Sea.

The chief, or at least the most easy acquisition of the Russians in the Caucasus was that of Imeretia, under the Czar Alexis Mikhailowitch. In fact, Alexander, the Czar of the Imeretians, who, like his predecessors, assumed the title of "King of Kings," resolved to follow the example of Alexander II, king of Kachetia, and with all his territory to deliver himself up to Russia. So, in 1650, he took, in the church, his oath to be faithful to the Moscovite Czar, and all the people who were present swore in a loud voice to be his slaves. However, it was only under the reign of the Emperor, Alexander, I that Mingrelia and Imeretia were declared to be Russian provinces.

* See Zouboff Kartina Kavkaskago Kraia, vol. iii.

† Staraja, Novaja, Gladva, Stchadrin, and Tcherwlenaiœ.

Several Russian families, belonging to merchants, having been, in 1711, murdered by the Lesghians, Peter I. marched against them in 1721, at the head of 20,000 men, who were supported by crafts sailing on the Caspian Sea. He defeated the Lesghians, founded on the Soulak the fort Sviatoikrest, (Holy Cross) took Derbend, ordered a descent to Bakou and indicated the most favourable spots for the erection of forts.

The Empress Anna lost all her possessions in the Caucasus, and founded Kisliar, on an arm of the Terek of the same name, which became the limit of Russian possessions in the Caucasus.

The Empress Elizabeth sent missionaries to the Ossetians, who built a church, but made only a few proselytes.

The Empress Catherine II. extended Russian domination over the Caucasus, on a large scale. She took possession of Kabardah, and founded there Mosdok. The Zaporogues, who had joined the Turks against her, submitted to the Russians, and were established along the Kuban and the Terek. The towns of Georgiewsk, Stavropol, and Ekaterenograd rose under the direction of General Jakoby.

In 1780, Potemkin invaded Patigorsk; and in 1784 Constantinogorsk and Vladikavkas were constructed. In 1785 General Lazareff defeated Omar Eman, as well as Alexander, the Georgian Czarewitch, on the river Tora, and Georgia was definitively occupied.

Anapa and Soudjoum Kale were then in the power of the Turks, who kept there a garrison. Those forts were taken by the Russians, during the war they had with the Turks; but after the peace they were restored to the Sultan.

Georgia, devastated by the Persians and the Lesghis,

united itself to Russia, under Paul I., by a treaty, signed on the 28th of September 1800, by George XIII., the son of Heraclius, an idiot prince, against whom disturbances were created by his own brothers. But, in 1802, the Emperor Alexander proclaimed Georgia to be a Russian province. However, after the disastrous expedition of 1808, against Erivan, Alexander exhibited a more pacific disposition, and, in 1813, the Genvese Scassi established commercial factories at Guelendchik and at Pshad. But those factories were destroyed by the Circassians, and hostilities were renewed.

Prince Zizianof, a Georgian by birth, and a general in the service of Russia, showed that there can be more obtained through a wise and cunning policy than through violence. He brought Abhasia under the Russian domination, and maintained himself in it through a wise administration. He, moreover, seized upon the fortress of Gangia, which he surnamed Elizabetopol. He was, on the 8th of February 1806, treacherously assassinated by the Persians, at the very moment when he advanced to receive the keys of the fortress of Bakou. His body is lying in Sion Cathedral at Tiflis, under a monument, raised by the Marquis Paulucci, commander general of Georgia, in 1812.

General Yermoloff took, at that period, the command of the Caucasus, and has left there the reputation of the best chief. It must, however, be taken into consideration that in his time hostilities had not the importance they have since acquired, as intestine wars divided the different Circassian populations.

Yermoloff showed himself generous towards the allied tribes, but terrible and cruel towards those that opposed

him. Among other tortures which he inflicted on prisoners, a ramrod was passed through their ears.

The Shamyl of that time was Amoulad-Bey, who roused Daghestan to war. Taken prisoner, his life was spared, but he took to flight. Yermoloff set a price on his head, and crushed the insurrection, but Amoulad-Bey was no more heard of.

In 1818, Yermoloff erected in Tchetchenia the forts Groznaia and Ousmachan-Yout; but the Tchetchenians seized, through stratagem, upon the fortress Amir-Hadshi-Yurt, and slaughtered the garrison.

The two generals, Grekof and Lissanewitch, came to besiege the fort. The Tchetchenians defended themselves till their powder was exhausted, when with sword in hand they opened a murderous passage through the Russian division. Then it was thought advisable to enter into negotiation. A single Mullah was admitted into the council of war. General Grekof insulted him. The Mullah stabbed him, and killed General Lissanewitch, a colonel and two Russian officers, before he fell under the balls of his unskilful enemies, who exercised their revenge on his corpse. However, General Yermoloff avenged the death of his lieutenants, by devastating the aouls situated along the Argun and the Sundsha.

On his accession to the throne, the first thing that Nicholas did was to recal General Yermoloff, acting thus through an old personal rancour. Yermoloff was succeeded by Paskiewitch, who was soon after sent to wage war against Persia, which ended by annexing to Russia the provinces of Erivan and Nachetchivan, which are still a part of the Caucasus.

In 1828, Paskiewitch directed with glory the campaign

in Asiatic Turkey; but he was not fortunate in the Caucasus. The expedition which, in 1831, he undertook to Abhasia, was sterile in results, but fertile in loss of men. The Polish war recalled him for ever from the Caucasus. He was replaced there, *ad interim*, by General Pankratieff, who signalized himself in several expeditions. It was in the year 1831 that the Russian General, Pulla, experienced a great defeat in the defile of Argun (devil), the Gibraltar of Tchetchenia. He left there 200 men dead, and carried away with him 300 soldiers killed and 500 wounded.

General Wiliaminof, who commanded the army of the Cis-Caucasus, inherited a part of Yermoloff's popularity. He was a patriot and a well-informed man, and died a natural death, in the Caucasus, in 1839. He undertook, it is true, in 1834, a futile expedition against the Circassians of the east, and lost many men, but he founded the fort Nikolaievsk.

He knew how to make himself feared by the Tchetchenians, and in his orders of the day used to write—"The infamous Tchetchenia rebels again." But his proclamation to the Circassians, in which he invited them to submit, is a model of the most presumptuous insolence—"If heaven," he said to them, "were to fall, it would be supported by Russian bayonets."

General Sass had, through his unforeseen excursions, caused himself to be so much feared that Circassian mothers used to frighten their children with his name. However, such had also been the case with regard to Zizianof, and even to Medem, who signalized themselves by their cruelties, as, indeed, did the majority of the Russian soldiers. With regard to Yermoloff, he was called by the Circassians, "The Russian devil" (*shaitan.*)

General Rosen had, in 1832, succeeded Paskiewitch in the general government of the Caucasus. War had spread considerably since the apparition of Kasi-Moullah, who, like the prophet, marched with the sword in one hand, and the Koran in the other. He roused Daghestan to hostilities and attacked the most important Russian fortresses on the Caspian Sea—such as Terku and Derbend—and pillaged the outskirts of Kisliar; he moreover threatened to invade Tchetchenia; but General Rosen resolved to strike a decisive blow against him, and to destroy his strength in Hemry, his native town. For that purpose he placed himself, in September, 1832, at the head of the expedition; but the honours of the victory won at Hemry belong to General Wiliaminof, under whose directions the battle was fought. On the 14th of October the Lesghis were defeated, the Murides killed, and Kasi-Moullah himself died fighting to the last.

At twenty-five versts from Hemry rose the fortress of Temrfichan-Shoura, so called after the name of the aoul, that recalls the recollection of the celebrated Timour.

It was believed, at that time, that everything was settled with regard to the Caucasus; but Hamsad-Bey took the place of Kasi-Moullah, and, to preserve Avaria from his domination, General Lanskoi marched, in 1834, against Hemry, whose inhabitants sided with the new Moullah. On hearing of the approach of a Russian detachment, they barricaded themselves at the head of the Koissou bridge, in order to maintain their communications between the two banks of the river. About twenty volunteers, of the celebrated regiment of Kour, placed at the head of the column, carried the barricades,—the enemy took to flight, and Hemry was entirely destroyed by the Russians. But

that town has risen again from its ruins as by enchantment; and two years afterwards no vestige of devastation was to be seen. However, justice requires that we state that the victory was owing to Colonel Kluge von Klugenau, who has since been made a lieutenant-general.

In 1837, in order to prevent Shamyl from seizing upon Avaria, General Fezi marched against the aoul Telitla, where the bey had retired with his uncle Kibet Magon. That campaign was called the Avarian expedition. Having, transformed Khansakh into a fortress, to the great displeasure of the Avarian allies, the Russians entered Andia;* and on the 9th of June they presented themselves before *Ashiltakh*, an aoul of 300 *Saklias*,† standing on a very strong position, and where 5,000 Circassians offered an obstinate resistance during a whole day. Ashiltakh was taken, but not without some considerable loss.

The inhabitants of that village, as well as those of Tchirkata, had concealed their riches in the grottoes of Akhoulgo, where the family of Shamyl had taken refuge. It was a fort formed by nature—a nest in rocks inaccessible on every side. After having destroyed, by cannon, the towers of old Akhoulgo, a battalion of the regiment of Apsheron seized upon a part of the forts and carried away sixty Amanates (Avarian hostages), whom Shamyl detained near himself; but Shamyl received a considerable reinforcement, and the Russians were compelled to retreat on the 16th of June. The mountaineers pursued them with shouts of triumph as far as the defile of Achalta, which is one verst distant from Akhoulgo. However, the 6th company of the regiment of Kour saved the

* The Russian soldiers called it India, and Avaria Bavaria.

† Huts in the rocks.

detachment, by defending the defile until they had time to carry pieces of artillery up the heights and to begin to fire on the enemy; a battalion arriving, just in time from Hemry, repulsed the mountaineers. Notwithstanding all this, the detachment attacked Telitla on the 3rd July (old style), and the next day a general assault was carried on, and the fight lasted all day; the 5th and 6th were employed in parleying with Shamyl, who gave his nephew Hamzat as an hostage and promised to remain faithful.

It was in the same year, 1837, that the Emperor Nicholas visited Tiflis.

The sight of the *Ouroussian** Sultan did not produce on the mountaineers the effect that was expected; he was disfigured by an inflammation on his cheek, and when he told them that "he had sufficient powder to blow up their mountains" they did not form a high opinion of his intellect.

The emperor was struck with the abuses that were committed in the Caucasus, and showed his desire to punish the shameful malversations of the chiefs: for that purpose he, at a review, took off the aiglets of his aide-de-camp, Prince Dadianof, the son-in-law of the general-in-chief, and gave them to the son of Rosen, in order not to hurt the feelings of the General too much. However, a mutual discontent was the result of the proceeding. Rosen was recalled, and, in 1839, the emperor sent Lieutenant-General Golovin to replace him, who before held the office of minister of public instruction at Warsaw.

The new general-in-chief, whose army was raised to 75,000 men, resolved to strike a decisive blow, and ordered General Grabbe to seize upon Akhoulgo.

* The Circassians gave to the Russians the name of Ouroussians.

Akhoulgo is a Tartar word, which means a place of meeting at a moment of alarm. The Russians call it a castle because it is shut up on every side, is composed of a compact mass of rocks, and is divided into two parts—the old and the new Akhoulgo, whose circumference is only two versts. On one side that mass of rocks rises perpendicularly above Koissu, to the height of one hundred fathoms; and on the other side it runs down into inaccessible defiles, intersected by torrents.

Shamyl, profiting by his defeats of 1837, had still more strongly fortified that frightful post; in doing this he had recourse to modern art, and, assisted by foreigners, had raised ramparts and digged subterranean vaults in the most favourable and most exposed places. Not satisfied with these formidable preparations, he had placed two detachments to stop the Russians on their way: the first opposed, in fact, their march at Buturnay, but it was overthrown; and the second, composed of 10,000 men, fought near Argouani on the 30th and 31st of May, and lost 1,500 men.

Grabbe blockaded, during two months, Akhoulgo, with eight battalions, which, on the 15th of July, were reinforced by five more. On seeing the defiling of three magnificent battalions of the regiment of the Count of Erivan (Paskiewitch), the officers said—"To-morrow two of them will be killed:" in fact, on the next day, an unfortunate assault was undertaken, and only one single battalion of that regiment came back.

On the 17th of August, the advanced forts of the new Akhoulgo were taken, and a murderous battle was fought during five days; on the 22nd of the same month (old style), the anniversary of the coronation of the Emperor Nicholas, the Russians entered Akhoulgo.

General Grabbe sent the son of General Golovin as bearer of that fortunate news to the Czar, who ordered medals to be struck, in remembrance of that assault, and distributed to the soldiers.

Golovin, who had only the rank of lieutenant-general, was promoted a general-in chief.

The plans of the campaign were, every year, traced in the war office at St. Petersburg; or if proposed by the general-in-chief they had to be approved by the Emperor. That system was necessarily liable to all the inconveniances of the Aulic council of Austria. The clerks of the war office had only few, or wrong notions of the Caucasus; and their plans had, through the force of events, to be necessarily modified when they reached their destination. Hence, a great responsibility weighed on the chiefs, who incurred the wrath of the Czar if they did not execute their orders, or if their execution was attended with a failure.

Thus of all the forts which, in 1840, had been projected at the war office, only a single one could be raised: it was that of Gersel-Aoul.

The promise of an amnesty to the Tchetchenians having been paralysed by the threats of Shamyl, it became necessary to carry war into their country. General Golofejeff undertook it, and experienced a check at the river Valerik, which General Klugev on Klugenau avenged on the 10th of July by defeating Shamyl personally.

The year 1840 was signalised by simultaneous and successive assaults, which the Circassians directed against the different Russian forts in the line of the Kouban. They took the most important of all, Nikolaievski, which commands the line of Guelendchik; but the fortress of

Mikhailof showed an heroic defence, and when resistance could be no longer prolonged, the soldiers set the powder magazine on fire and the conqueror was blown up with the garrison.

The Russian garrisons had been much reduced by the contagious diseases that raged in winter; but the Circassians, remembering their resistance, did not, for a long time, attempt to besiege the forts.

General Anrep, who replaced General Raievski in the command of the right flank, undertook to execute vengeance for the loss of the forts. He carried an expedition among the Ubikhes and Djegetes, and, assisted by gun-boats, caused them some injury. Ali-Oku was killed, but his grandfather, Hadshi Dokhum-Okoŭ, the veteran of the Ubikhes, renewed the battle, and the Russians were compelled to retreat.

In the spring of 1841, General Golovin himself joined Grabbe before Tcherkey, with a small detachment, of which he left a part under the orders of General Vegelsanck, on the shores of the Koissou. This proceeding has been much criticised, and yet it decided the fate of Tcherkey; for, whilst the main body ascended with difficulty the mountains, under a shower of balls, and Shamyl had to be repulsed at every step, General Vegelsank crossed the river and seized upon Tcherkey, but he lost his life in the taking of that town.

Tchetchenia was again devastated; but Shamyl, availing himself of the return of the Russians to their winter camps, collected an army of 15,000 Tchetchenians, invaded the country of the Kumikes, the allies of the Russians, and threatened Kisliar. The colonel-commander of that town came out to meet him with 100 soldiers and two cannons.

Shamyl destroyed a part of them, and took the others prisoners. The commanders of Groznoia and of Tchervlenna marched with their troops against Shamyl, who prevented their junction and defeated them separately, carrying away with him an immense booty, consisting of cattle.

It was with the view of punishing Shamyl for his success that Grabbe, in the following year, carried the war into the country of the Gorumlatians. The chief purpose of the expedition was to take possession of Dargo, one of the residences of Shamyl, who, on hearing that the Russians were advancing, transported himself to Andalal.

The Naib, Hadshi-Iagvia, was defeated by the Russian van-guard; and a detached body, under the orders of Prince Argoutinski Dolgorouki, having taken possession of Tchirak and Kumikh, brought the neighbouring populations under the domination of the Russians.

Grabbe was only ten versts from Dargo when he ordered a retreat, for his loss of men had been considerable; his troops had been continually harassed by the enemy, and were completely exhausted through fatigue and hardship. But the retreating Russian army was nearly annihilated in the forests of Itchkeri; for the Circassians, seeing it retire, were fired with increased fury, and rushed upon it with an unparalleled impetuosity, especially on the 1st of June. Having taken prisoner a Russian drummer, they compelled him to beat the drum, and many Russian soldiers, attracted by the sound, fell into the snare. More than half of the officers were killed; and the death of Lieutenant-colonel Tresskin was particularly deplored. Moreover, discipline was forgotten;* however, at the sight of several

* We have been told by an eye-witness that during that disastrous retreat, a soldier struck an officer with his bayonet, in order to take away from him a bottle of porter.

cannons, which had been taken by the Circassians, the Russians felt their courage revived, took them back from the enemy, and the column returned with a loss of 8,000 men to the fort from which it had started.

The minister of war, Prince Tchernisheff, was then performing a journey of inspection in the Caucasus, and saw the return of the troops. General Grabbe was recalled, though the emperor acknowledged that the rout was more owing to the elements than to the general. Yet, nevertheless, the commander-in-chief, who had disapproved of the expedition, was involved in Grabbe's disgrace. He retired, leaving his name to an important fort near the Caspian Sea. He was replaced by General Neidhardt, who was before an *ad interim* governor-general of Moscow.*

General Zass was also compelled to leave Prochnoiokop, whence he had carried on a partisan war, fatal to the mountaineers. But at length the Circassians had also learned, through their spies, how to shelter themselves from his razzias.

General Golovin had, at the end of his administration, pronounced himself in favour of a defensive system, which was adopted by Prince Vorontzof, after the unfortunate expedition directed also against Dargo. To surround the enemy with a net of forts, to wait for events, and to confine themselves to razzias,—such was the plan.

Failures had, up to that time, been attributed to the rivalry which existed, not only among the different generals commanding separate troops, but also between themselves and the general governor. However, it was only in 1845 that the emperor thought of obviating those misunderstand-

* Golovin was soon appointed governor-general of Riga, and afterwards a member of the council of the empire.

ings, by giving an unlimited power to Count Vorontzof. who was also delivered from subordination to the minister of war.

But it had also been said that the general-governor at Tiflis was too remote from the field of battle to know what was to be done. The language of Grabbe has been contradicted by the disaster at Itchkeri. Zass acted but too much according to his own notions: and even now a certain latitude is allowed to the chiefs of the different provinces. Prince Barratinsky had undertaken several expeditions on his own responsibility.

General Neidhardt showed himself great in little things, and a pedant in the military profession. In 1844, he saw Shamyl take possession of the fort Ounzorila; and Kluge von Klugenau, who had run to its defence, with insufficient forces, defeated. Shamyl ravaged all Avaria. In the following year Neidhardt marched against him, but allowed him to escape. He therefore was recalled, and unable to bear his disgrace, died of grief.

At the time of the promotion of Count Vorontzof, the army was increased to 150,000 men.

The emperor had reserved for himself the right of giving orders, and the first he gave was a most unfortunate one. He ordered everything to be sacrificed for the purpose of taking Dargo. It was to comply with Nicholas's injunction that he undertook his deplorable expedition. Unable to defend that nest of no strategical importance, Shamyl allowed it to be taken; but while the army was retreating, he attacked it so successfully in the forest of Itcherki, already once so fatal to the Russians, that Vorontzof was nearly totally destroyed. He indeed would not have escaped, had not two Circassian emissaries succeeded in

carrying to General Freytag the order to come to the help of his chief.

The Russians lost in that defeat 4,000 men; and three generals, Passek, Fock, and Voinof, were among the killed. Eye-witnesses have told us that the detachment wept with joy on seeing the arrival of the Freytag division, which in fact drew it from the position where it seemed doomed to perish.

Count Vorontzof was for that rout rewarded with the title of Prince. The loss of Passek was irreparable. He was loved by the soldiers, and had, during his short and brilliant career, given proofs of a high capacity. The Circassians cut off his head, and during several days carried it triumphantly on a spike.

The Generals Sleptzoff and Krukovsky perished in a later engagement; and the diplomacy of Prince Vorontzof had no other result than to bring over to the Russians the Naib Khadji-Murat, who after having learned, in the Russian camp, all that he wished to know, fled to Shamyl, with fourteen Murides. He was attacked by 140 soldiers of the Ossetian militia, and 55 of his men were killed, and as many wounded.

In 1847, the fort Golovin, in the country of the Ubekhians, was attacked by those mountaineers; but they were so terribly repulsed, and their loss was so considerable that they put to death the Polish deserter who had advised them to undertake that expedition.*

Official reports state that the expedition which, in 1848,

* Mr. Dikson, who has visited the Golovin fort, says, "Its situation is extremely pleasing, being at the entrance of a valley, overlooked by wooded hills, above which tower distant and more distant cliffs, lofty and more lofty, till snow and clouds veil them from sight."—"Tour to the Caucasus."

Shamyl carried into Kabardah, had no other result but to weaken the prestige attached to that prophet; but they do not say a word about the devastations he committed.

According to those official reports, Shamyl, at the head of 20,000 men with several pieces of cannon, had crossed the Sounja, and wished to surprise the Russian centre. General Freytag, informed of the fact, concentrated six battalions of infantry and 1,000 horse in the fort of Groznaia. Acting in concert with Generals Nestoroff and Zavadovsky, he endeavoured to enclose the prophet in a narrow pass; so Shamyl, in order to escape, was compelled to disperse his infantry, and flee through the forests at the rate of four versts an hour. Nestoroff crossed the defile of Zontchin, cut down the forests and destroyed eleven villages between Assa and the Fortanga.

However, we can perceive, through that report, that the Russians did not prevent Shamyl from crossing the Terek, and reaching the road to Goria; we believe, also, that a Kabardian chief, Mahomet Omosorof, impeded much the retreat of the Russians between the Assa and the Puta.

Shamyl retraced back his steps, crossed again the Sounja, and threatened the Russian line on the Terek. Lieutenant-colonel Sleptzoff repulsed him, and, by making use of Congreve rockets, carried consternation into the ranks of the Circassians.

General Shwartz defeated Daniel Bey at Katael: Shamyl attempted to cut off the retreat of the Russians who had just seized upon the aoul Guergebil. Prince Argoutenski Dolgorouky attacked him in spite of the disproportion of his forces; and if the Russians did not obtain great advantages it was entirely owing to the cholera, the snow which covered the roads, and the diversion which Shamyl effected

on the Lesghian line; so, as it may be seen, it is always the same tale over and over again.

Colonel Sleptzoff made a successful expedition on the Valerik. However, the taking of the aoul of Salty did not restore tranquillity in Daghestan, as it had been expected.

In 1850, the Grand Duke, heir to the crown, went to have his share of fighting in the Circassian wars, and he obtained the cross of St. George for having himself fallen on a band of mountaineers who attacked his escort; and his gallantry contributed to revive the courage of the Russian army.

On the 15th August, 1852, Prince Bariatinski, who commanded in the fortress of Vosdvigenski, carried on a successful expedition. 1,500 men passed the defile of Argoun, that is of "the Devil," which is eight versts distance from the fortress. They marched against the aoul Kankale, half of the soldiers remaining to guard the defile, which is forty-five feet in height, overspread with *bainitzi*, and is considered insuperable; therefore, says our correspondent, the news that the Russians had gone through it, carried terror into the hearts of the Circassians.

But we do not understand that terror, for two reasons: the first is, that the Circassians must have expected that the Russians would have passed it, since they did not defend it; and the second is, that they soon hastened to the passage in order to drive back the enemy, as was usual with them. And our correspondent himself adds, "that if the Russians had delayed a few minutes longer, the whole detachment would have been annihilated." In fact, as soon as they had accomplished their razzia, killed those who opposed them, and taken prisoners, they came back to the defile where the rear guard was attacked, and

within twenty minutes lost twelve officers and seventy soldiers. Colonel Simeon Vôrontzoff, who commanded the regiment of Chasseurs, called after the name of his father, was, for his share in that expedition, promoted to the rank of general.

The present rupture between Russia and Turkey has reanimated the war of the Caucasus.

The following account is given to *The Times*, by its own correspondent at Vienna:—

"The recent attacks of the Caucasian tribes were directed, in the west, against the fortresses and redoubts which are posted along the coast of the Black Sea, from Soudjouk Kale to the fort of Naroghinskoi, and in the east against the detached post and military cordons which occupy the banks of the Terek, and several positions in Daghestan. For a time Prince Vorontzoff was completely surrounded by the Circassians, and could not disengage himself until the troops on the Turkish frontier were sent to his assistance. The 20,000 or 25,000 men, forwarded in haste from Sebastopol, are now on the frontiers of Armenia.

"Sheik Shamyl has informed Omar Pasha, the commander-in-chief of the Turkish army, that he is prepared to act in concert with him at the head of 20,000 men. The news is spread in Constantinople that, after having, as they supposed, gained over Shamyl, by making him a present of 60,000 ducats, the 20,000 Russians, who were in Daghestan, left for the Turkish frontiers. On their way they were attacked, in the defiles of Zakartala, by some 30,000 mountaineers, and completed routed."

The numbers on both sides are evidently exaggerated.

We learn from another part that Sefar Bey, a cele-

brated Circassian chief, who has been twenty years detained at Adrianople, started for the coast of the Black Sea, to organise an insurrection among his countrymen.

The Sultan, perceiving the fault of his predecessors, who had determined the fate of the Circassians, by ceding to the Russians the coast of the Black Sea, without the consent of the former, has just now concluded an offensive and defensive alliance with Shamyl. The fort of St. Nicholas has just been taken by Guyon, an English renegade, who holds the title of Murshed-Pasha, but not without a considerable sacrifice, which, however, has been compensated by a great quantity of munition found in the fortress, among which are 4,000 muskets, of Liege manufacture.

"Prince Vorontzoff," writes a friend to me, "is feeble and vain, and the Countess Choiseul, a Polish lady by birth, directs his court, which calls to mind that of Potemkin."

Yermoloff says, "That the Circassians must have increased in numbers, because he never killed in a year so many Circassians as Vorontzoff does in a single expedition."

In fact, when Vorontzoff wishes to procure for anybody an opportunity of distinguishing himself, he sends him on a false expedition, upon which he may report as he likes.

CHAPTER XII.

MODE OF WARFARE IN THE CAUCASUS.

Marches—Difficulties for the Russian Army—Encampments—Manners of the Soldiers and Officers—Razzias—Arms of the Circassians—Treatment of Prisoners—Degraded Officers—Deserters—Kouznetzoff—Retreats of the Russians—War in the Caucasus endless.

THE war costume of the Russian soldier is not the same as that which he puts on for reviews. The shako and the helmet are replaced by the foraging cap, which offers but a very weak resistance to the terrible Circassian shashka (sabre). Circassian nobles sometimes wear a coat of mail, which is proof against balls; but the small balls used by the Circassians easily pierce the Russian uniform; even the bayonet glides over the Circassian coat of mail. In such a case the Russian soldier falls under the blows of his adversary, unless he dexterously rushes upon him, and seizing him by the middle of the body, overthrows and kills him.

The light war accoutrement of the Russian soldier is a matter of necessity; in fact, how could he wear a heavy armour in his harassing marches? To lighten his burden the infantry knapsack is even replaced by a canvas bag,

tied with leather straps, from which hang his pipe, his brush, and the small pan in which he boils his soup; for the Russian soldier likes neither rich nor cold food, and, when he cannot get anything better, boils water and dips his biscuit in it. The besace holds provision for six days, linen, and a mirror, a few inches in size, in which the poor soul now and then has the satisfaction to contemplate himself. To these objects sometimes a religious book is added. Happy the man who is provided with it; for, in moments of halt, he becomes the reader of the company.

But when the journey is resumed the importance of the reader vanishes: he is entirely eclipsed by the *lustic*, that is, the merry story-teller, who animates the march by his narratives, or his humorous jokes, which convulse his companions with laughter.

Soldiers on the road are allowed to carry their gun either on the shoulder or on their back, in order that they may feel its weight less. Their muskets are heavy, and of bad quality. Happy the Jounker* who has a carbine, and twice happy if he have a double-barrelled one.

The Russian soldier does not study elegance. His boots, the soles of which he covers with nails, go over his trowsers, and he carries his folded cloak on his shoulder. He is always ready, and good-humoured; for, in the field, he receives an allowance of wine. With regard to the officer, he hopes for distinction, promotion, and rank. The luggage is placed in *arbas*,† and when the music has struck up the general march, the column moves on.

That music is indeed an object of great curiosity for

* The nobleman who is an ensign.

† An *arba* is a cart with two immense wheels, rising above its borders. Arbas are used in Georgia as well as in Daghestan.

savages. When it is executed in peaceful aouls, the mountaineers hasten to the spot, and stand on tip-toe to discover whence those unknown sounds are proceeding. Some approach the instruments closely, and place their ear in the opening: others go so far as to listen to the stick of the drum-major.

Madame Pfeiffer, in her "Journey Round the World," laughs at the Russian music, which she heard at Tiflis. It is no doubt inferior to the Piedmontese military music, but it is superior to the music of the English regiments.

The column, as we have said, moves on; it is long—almost endless; for often, instead of walking two abreast, they all proceed one after the other. It is visible from a great distance, from the glittering of the bayonets reflecting the rays of the sun. The Cossacks of the Don close the rear, and those of the line have the task to reconnoitre the road. A few cannons are dragged on with great difficulty. If a carriage happen to break in the mountains, it is necessary to stop until it is repaired. In fact, obstacles of different kind frequently impede the march of the army.

If it be intended to surprise the enemy, the soldiers march so noiselessly that one would hear a bird fly. However, as the spies of the enemy glide everywhere, the chiefs often keep the purpose of the expedition secret.

Let us join the column, when, on ordinary circumstances it has ascended the mountain, and seems lost in the clouds; and let us listen to the conversation of the soldiers, as it will give us an insight into their peculiar notions.

"Look!" says one, "it is pretended that the clouds are frost, but they are only a mist." "Do you see," adds another, "yonder, the rainbow on a rock? It is reported

that it absorbs water, but there is not a drop of water on the stone where it is resting. It is merely the reflection of the sun." "Ah!" another says, "if we are still going on, we shall ascend up to heaven! How great is the power of the Lord!"

It is enough to make any one dizzy to look from the summit of these mountains to the bottom. The precipices that intersect the soil frighten the most intrepid; and gaping abysses are ready to devour the man whose foot should glide. Nevertheless, a soldier will say to another:

"But see, there are at the bottom stones quite round; some are small, and others large; the large ones contain little ones. Do they come from heaven, or are they families of stones, which grow up? He is not a good spirit who plays with such bowls." "When we are in Arabia (Avaria), and in India (the aoul Andi), we shall have such a quantity of bourkous, that we will make tents with them."

Let us now witness another scene—the halt is ordered; the muskets are arranged into circular piles; tents are erected, if there be room; but if the space be not sufficient for that purpose, the officer is satisfied with sheltering himself in his cloak, on one half of which he lies down. Fires are lighted, every one warming himself in his turn. He who is harassed with fatigue naturally falls asleep; and sometimes his cloak is caught by the fire; then he is awakened and told, "You have caught a *fox*."

The Samovar (kettle) always follows the officers of the same tent. How beneficial is tea in those marches! It revives and warms a man, by spreading a beneficent balm through his veins. Tea, which when taken habitually and every day, is but a common beverage, becomes, under those circumstances, a welcome luxury.

Rich officers convey provisions, wine, fowls, and porter, in their luggage; but those who are poor have nothing except oatmeal with suet, and mutton, either dried or broiled. Should it rain very hard, the water penetrates the tents, and falls on your clothes, and everything you have; nothing can be more disagreeable, except the overwhelming heat of the summer, which torments you with an unquenchable thirst.

When the column arrives at a friendly aoul, the inhabitants come to trade with the soldiers, bringing fruits, milk, eggs, and butter; and receiving in exchange Russian coin; but they prefer silver to copper, and return the pieces of copper for half their value.

At the sight of the first rays of the sun, the column resumes its journey, always so painful in the mountains, that sometimes the army walks but fifteen versts a day. It often happens that the cannon can only be taken to the top of rocks on the backs of the men. A cannon is the terror of the Circassians; they call it "one thousand men," thus exaggerating its importance, or its effect; or they give it the name of "old gun," or "the emperor's pistol."

When an aoul, which has revolted, is to be chastised, it is seldom taken by surprise. The inhabitants abandon their dwellings before the arrival of the Russians, carry away with them everything they have, and leave merely the bare walls. They retire into the mountains, and adopt measures to cut off the retreat of the Russian detachment, or to pour showers of balls on it as it returns. In such cases their fields are ravaged, and their saklias burned down.

But on many occasions the inhabitants remain and intrench themselves in their subterranean huts, which have

to be taken by assault, and only with a great sacrifice of men. The Russian soldiers must pierce the walls and pass from one *saklia* to another, according to the chances of the fight and the nature of the soil. Balls are showered from the lower lodgings, and the upper *saklias* have to be stormed with the bayonet. The fight is carried on in the streets and on the rocks; it is a desperate struggle—a deadly duel between man and man, in which the bayonet and the sword contend against the Circassian dagger and sabre.

The Tchetchenians follow in general the first mode of warfare, and the Lesghians the second. They are attached to their dwellings and defend them to death.

The Circassians consider their arms as their most valuable wealth. They preserve and transmit them as a sacred inheritance: hence we find in their possession the most rare sabres, the most precious daggers, lances of ancient crusaders, Italian pistols, on which we find Latin inscriptions, and sometimes curious ones. Those inscriptions explain the origin of those pistols, and the names of their first possessors.

As a proof of the excellence of Circassian arms, I may state, that the barrels of Russian muskets have been cut into two parts, in the battle, by a stroke of the *shashka*. Russian officers could not do better than adopt those sabres. I do not hesitate to declare that the use of the point would answer their purpose better; but fencing is still unknown to the Sclavonians, and they have in general a great aversion to the use of the point. "Pigs," they say, "are run through, but not men."

But, after all, what is a bayonet or a lance, if not a kind of pitch-fork? Yet Russian peasants very willingly make use of the pitch-fork.

A man may be dangerously wounded with the edge of the sword, but he is more surely killed with the point. Hence the advantage of Frenchmen over Russians in isolated engagements, and of Piedmontese over Austrians in a single fight. Men have been known who had received ten, twenty, and forty strokes of the sabre without having been entirely disabled, and who have been restored to perfect health.

Circassians have learned how to ward off the bayonet; whilst the Russian officers do not know themselves how to parry the *shashka*.

The maxim of Souvoroff, followed up to the present time in the Russian army, and according to which, "A ball is mad—it finds the guilty, but the bayonet is brave," is, in our opinion, an absurd principle. Russian soldiers fire without taking aim; that may answer against a column, but not against isolated Circassians. Finland sharp-shooters, who are excellent shots, have at length been sent to the Caucasus; and Russian sharp-shooters have also been improved; yet, in the art of firing, the Russians are very inferior to French or English soldiers.

Now, if an aoul be taken by surprise, all its defenders are killed, and the women and children carried away prisoners. During the fight no quarter is given.

It is difficult to determine which of the two belligerent parties is less harsh towards its prisoners. Those taken by the Circassians become slaves, and must work in the fields, or they are shut up in prison, where they are often beaten, until their ransom arrives; however, much depends upon the temper of the master into whose hands they fall; some keeping their prisoners tied to a chain during the night. With regard to the barbarous custom of having short

horse-hair introduced, by means of incisions, into the heels of prisoners, to prevent their escape, it is but very seldom practised, and only towards those who have, several times, attempted to run away.

Let us now come to the Russians as masters. Siberia and prisons in the south of Russia are filled with Circassians, called brigands, whose great crime, in general, has consisted in heroically fighting for the defence of their native land.

The Circassians make a difference between a deserter and a prisoner. Whoever comes freely among them is hospitably received; and there are many Russian deserters who quietly dwell in Lesghian or Tcherkessian aouls. They have, in fact, become Circassians, having wives and children. But the Tcherkessians mistrust renegades, though less than did the Algerians, who always compelled deserters to fight in the first rank.

As Russian soldiers are not ill treated when on service in the Caucasus, and the kind of life led by the mountaineers has but little attraction for them, they seldom are tempted to desert, and to expose themselves to be retaken, brought back, and flogged through the line. Even among the Poles deserters are not so numerous as is supposed.

There is a numerous class of men among the soldiers of the Caucasus, which the government turns into a military and, above all, political Botany-bay—we speak of the degraded. That class ought, according to appearances, to supply a great number of deserters; but such is not the case. The degraded, who have not been punished for any dishonest deed, are treated with so much delicacy that they do not think of passing over to the enemy.

Out of the ranks, the officers continue to associate with their former companions, or with the ex-nobles; the soldiers, however, show them respect. How could it be otherwise, in presence of death, that equalises all? Therefore we are not afraid to proclaim our approbation of those noble promptings which, after all, are Christian feelings; and we obey the commands of truth, without fearing the cruelty of Nicholas, who has often reproached generous men with that kind of familiarity. The chiefs, no doubt, do not all act in the same manner; but the most severe would consider it disgraceful to strike, even in the ranks, a political *degraded*. These men, compelled to be soldiers, sometimes endeavour to escape to Turkey or Persia, but they do not go over to the Circassians to fight against their own countrymen.

We must add, however, that some generals, though kindly disposed, fearing the reports of the *gendarmes*, are under the necessity of maintaining a certain reserve, and would not dare to invite any *degraded* to their table.

Among the most renowned Russian deserters we will mention Kouznetzoff, an artist in *fireworks*, of the Russian artillery, who, being reprimanded by his general on account of a firework, joined Shamyl, carrying with him an implacable hatred against Russian nobles and officers. He never ceases to ask Shamyl to place at his disposal the life of every Russian officer who is made prisoner; but the Circassian chief does not yield to his entreaties.

However, one day that Shamyl had taken twenty-two Russian officers, Kouznetzoff swore that he would have their lives. He stopped the provisions sent to them from the Russian camp; ordered a cask of honey to be opened, and found in it a letter, addressed to their chief, a lieutenant-

colonel, in which the means of escaping with his companions were indicated to him. Kouznetzoff showed that document to Shamyl, and obtained permission to dispose of the prisoners, among whom there were several superior officers. He caused them all to be hanged.

Atachikof, a Cossack officer, who, irritated by the proceedings of a superior chief, had passed over to the Circassians, was not so cruel towards Glebof, whom I have intimately known, and who was, with my brother, an aide-de-camp to General Golovin, afterwards to General Neidhart, and finally to Prince Vorontzoff. In 1844, Glebof was sent to St. Petersburg with the despatches of General Neidhart. Atachikof, having heard of his departure, persuaded the Circassians to seize him on the road to Stavropol, and was charged, with six Lesghians, to carry the project into execution. Glebof was a man of uncommon courage; but, dangerously wounded, he was made prisoner, and obtained his liberty for the sum of 2,000 silver rubles.

We are now going to relate an anecdote of a different character, which shows that some Circassians also pass over to the Russians.

Baron Turnau, an aide-de-camp to General Gourko, went in disguise among the Ubikhes, in order to become acquainted with their country. He was discovered, and shut up in a dungeon, where he suffered horribly, on account of the delay of his ransom. A serf of the chief who detained him prisoner, killed his master, whose conduct had excited his vengeance, delivered the baron, and conducted him back among the Russians on his own horse.

The Circassians never leave the corpses of their brothers on the field of battle, or in the hands of the enemy. They

prefer to give up victory rather than abandon their dead, and they come to demand them of the Russians. One day General Raieffski, who commanded on the right flank, restored them their fallen countrymen, saying, "That he did not wage war against the dead." The Circassians answered, that "They prayed to God he would not leave his body without burial, if he ever fell in battle."

The Russians also carry off their dead, when they can do it. The Cossacks especially show themselves scrupulous in paying the last duties to their brothers killed in the fight.

The greatest disasters of the Russians occur in their retreat. The enemy wait for them in the forests and defiles, and if the Russians have not taken the precaution to occupy them, which cannot possibly be done for a great distance, they lose there more men than in all the rest of the expedition, besides the booty which is often taken from them, with part of their own luggage.

The retreat, embarrassed with the wounded* and the prisoners, is always difficult, and beset with hardships. In general the march of the army is more harassing than fighting itself. Moreover, fever and dysentery ravage the Russian army, to the extent of carrying off 20,000 men annually.

When is, then, an end to be put to the war? The souls just subdued rebel as soon as the Russians have withdrawn, or the Murids come there. Peace, say the Russian military men, cannot be obtained unless all the inhabitants are slaughtered. That measure has always been rejected by the Russian government, which plumes itself on its

* The Circassians treat wounds better than Russian surgeons do.

humanity; but which shows so little concern for the chronic effusion of blood, caused by this protracted war.

There might be colonization, it is true, but the population of Russia is not sufficiently numerous to colonise the Caucasus; besides, the inhabitants of the plain are not willing to leave their fertile fields, to go and cultivate rocks in the mountains.

The Russian forts are too isolated to afford timely assistance to one which is threatened; while the Circassians, by uniting forces, superior to those of the garrisons, will have more chance of attacking them successfully in detail, when they have improved in the art of carrying on a siege, or have artillery at their service. In the meantime they undertake sanguinary irruptions among the Russian colonists, execute razzias, carry away the cattle, and sometimes the wives of the Cossacks, a thing which does not occur in the war of Algiers. Moreover the Russian forts, though very numerous, have been found to be insufficient.

The system of forts was abandoned in Africa by General Bugeau and replaced with advantage by mobile columns. It is true that movements are more difficult in the Caucasus than in Africa, and the Russians have still a great deal to learn from the French in the art of war.

One cannot help smiling on reading, in the work of "Hommaire de Hill," that the prolongation of war in the Caucasus is owing to the essential difference which exists between its mountains and other mountains. "In the Caucasus," he says, "naked rocks cover the feet of the mountains, and the plains, instead of being there, are spread on the summit." But such is not the general character of those ridges.

A writer in the "*Revue des Deux Mondes*," April, 1853, asks if Algeria is not as mountainous as the Caucasus. The highest summit of the Atlas is 7,000 feet, and that of the Caucasus 17,000. Besides, the forests of the Caucasus offer more obstacles to the passage of armies than those of Algeria. There are marshes in both countries, it is true, but *saklias* are unknown in Africa. Moreover, the French soldier is more fit for war in the mountains than the Russian soldier, who becomes inferior to himself when he is out of the ranks, isolated, and does not feel the elbow of his neighbour. Russian soldiers require to be collected into masses, and kept under the control of military discipline. As long as the spirit of the army is not altered, the Russian soldier will be a bad sharp-shooter and a bad partisan.

Razzias have not been borrowed from the French. The Cossacks have never carried on any other kind of war; and Yermolof practised them. But a Lamoriciere might accomplish great things in the Caucasus.

In order to give a further insight into the character of the Circassians, we will state the fact, not sufficiently known, that the Mamelukes of Egypt were of Circassian origin.

Under the domination of Syricus in Egypt, Melec-Salha, jealous of his vassals, ordered a great number of Christian slaves to be sent to him from Circassia and Mingrelia. He composed an army with them, and as they continued to be slaves, they received the name of Mamelukes.*

The Mamelukes were powerless against French squares,

* "Modden's Travels in Turkey, Egypt, and Palestine."

and the Circassians seldom attack Russian columns. In fact, Napoleon is reported to have said:—

"One single Mameluke is equal to ten French horsemen; but one hundred foot soldiers will rout one thousand Mamelukes."

CHAPTER XIII.

DAGHESTAN.

Limits — Inhabitants — The Lesghians — Avaria — Saklias — Gardens — Women—Marriages —Mills — Bridges — The Parcelling of the Land— Suphism—Retaliation.

ENGLISH travellers have visited the west of the Caucasus: French and German tourists have overrun Georgia, and described the country subjected to Russia; but Daghestan, the field of war, is yet unknown to Europe. To make the commercial and political world acquainted with it, is the important task that we have undertaken.

The word Daghestan is of Mongolian origin, meaning, "the country of the mountains." Daghestan is a triangle, formed, on the south, by the Caspian Sea, on the north by the river Soulak (soft water), and by the chain of mountains which unites the Soulak to the sea, and disappears in it to the south of the town of Kouba.

The Russians divide Daghestan into two parts: the southern part extends from Kouba to Derbend, and the northern from Derbend to the Soulak. Lesghistan is the territory situated between the ridge of the mountains and

the sea. The river Soulak, before taking this last name, flows into two arms of the sea, which are called Koissou (in Tartar, the water of the sheep). The country comprised between these two Koissous, is Avaria.

Daghestan is inhabited by Tartars and Lesghians, who call themselves Taoul, that is mountaineers. The first occupy the borders and the plain, the second were probably driven into the mountains by those same Tartars.

The Tartars are governed by khans, the most considerable of whom are the Shamkhal of Tarki and the Khan of Mekhtoulin.

The Lesghians consist of patriarchal associations, ruled by the elders, whose power is very limited, being only apparent in general enterprises. The judges (cadi) decide civil contentions. The edet (usus) settles criminal affairs on the principle of the law of blood.

Avaria formerly extended far beyond the limits we have indicated; for, towards the end of the eighteenth century, the Khan Omar raised tribute on the Czar Heraclius II. of Georgia, on the Khans of Derbend, Kouba, Bakou, and Chiva, and on the pasha of Akhaltzik; but in consequence of the events which have occurred, and which we have already mentioned, the power of Avaria has almost vanished.

The chain of Daghestan forms three distinct divisions. The western side is composed of uninhabitable rocks, covered with oak and beech trees. The table land of the middle offers fertile plains, watered by impetuous torrents, and producing magnificent pasturage. Sterile steeps extend along the sea; but they contain saline lakes, which are very useful to the Nomad Nogais, who are wandering in those deserts.

In complexion and features the Lesghians differ from other tribes. They are commonly fair, with blue or grey eyes, and appear to be a northern race. They are, in general, tall, but not so well shaped as the other Circassians. Thick brows and wrinkles on the forehead seem to add to their martial deportment. Their round hairy caps, their pelisses of sheep's skin, with the tail worked into a pocket,—garments which they never lay aside, not even in summer,—give them a savage appearance.

The Lesghians are more partial to Persian than to Circassian costumes. They manufacture a kind of knitted cloth, of excellent wear, which is procured even by Russian officers.

The habitations in Daghestan, as throughout all the eastern Caucasus, are called saklis; and are constructed with unhewn stones, cemented with clay. The use of mortar is unknown there, and therefore dwellings do not offer the least resistance to Russian cannon balls, unless they are hewed in the rock. Beneath the flat roofs openings are constructed for the purpose of firing through them. The windows are turned inside, looking on a gallery. These saklis are oblong squares with two stories. Towers are numerous there, as in every other part of the Caucasus, and are used for the defence of the habitations. There are court-yards, but very close to one another, and the streets are excessively narrow. The use of panes of glass is unknown, except at Djengoutai, where the castle of the Khan of Mekhtouli is provided with that piece of agreeable luxury. Gardens are very numerous, and rich in a variety of fruit trees. Those gardens, formed on rocks, proclaim the extraordinary perseverance of the inhabitants; for the earth has often to be brought from a great distance

on asses' backs. One sees narrow enclosures rising one above the other, like so many steps. Apricots are abundant, and sell at eighty kopecks assignat—a sack. There are oblong and purple apples, of excellent quality; and grapes with which very good champagne might be made. But the gardens are not near so numerous in those parts of the Caucasus that are less rocky.

Horses are scarce, but there are numerous small asses, very vigorous and excellent to carry loads.

The Lesghians are almost the only people in the Caucasus who do not speak or understand Tartar. Their dialect differs from all other Circassian languages, and its pronunciation is very difficult, as European languages are wanting in the sounds requisite for the utterance of Lesghian words.

Women are secluded in the back saklis. They are less elegant and less careful of their persons than other Circassian women, who believe they would commit a sin did they not assiduously cultivate those charms bestowed upon them by nature. Lesghian women are not so handsome, and they do not practise ablutions so frequently as Adighian women.

They take the veil when twelve years old—I mean they begin at that age to conceal their faces; but they are coquettish enough to allow a curious eye to scan on a part of their features.

Matrimony is but a kind of sale and purchase. The sum which the suitor has to pay the father for the value of the young girl, is always much discussed, and that money is called *kaben*. On the eve of the wedding the two parties go to the bath, and take their meal separately. On the morning of the nuptials the friends of

the future husband go to the girl's home to receive the betrothed, who plays a little comedy, and pretends she cannot part with her dear parents. However she is placed on a donkey, when an attendant of the bridegroom takes off his girdle and lays it on her. That is the beginning of the end, and everything else goes on smoothly.

The Lesghians, in spite of the Koran, and of Shamyl himself, are addicted to smoking. They even manufacture very pretty clay pipes, embellished with silver ornaments. They are also skilful manufacturers of elegant vases, overlaid with silver,

The dwellings of the rich are usually in the middle of the sakli, a column in carved wood standing opposite the window. Cushions, cloths, and garments, are placed on boards. The floor and the walls are covered with wool or grass carpets, exquisitely worked, and chimneys are sunk in the wall, being almost imperceptible.

The mills and bridges of the Lesghians deserve peculiar attention. Water is not collected by means of dykes, but is carried by a canal to the height of the mill roof, thence through a narrow wood conduit it falls under the mill, and sets in motion a small horizontal wheel, which is provided with eight or ten wings, and to which is attached a cylinder, which makes the stone turn; but there is no cog-wheel.

Those canals, which serve also to irrigate the fields, extend three or four verts, and raise the water several fathoms high. But the soil, uneven everywhere, is very favourable to the execution and working of those artificial streams.

Arched bridges throw Russian engineers into despair. Unable to sink piles in impetuous torrents, they are re-

duced to the necessity of imitating the Lesghians, who construct a bridge in the following manner: — having obstructed the stream with stones, as far as to the place where it carries away the largest, they lay a row of beams, which extend a third longer than the dyke. They cover those beams with stones, and then they lay a second and a third wooden row, until all the space is covered fully and smoothly. By these means bridges of considerable flexibility are raised; but they are sufficiently strong to bear the heaviest loads, such as Russian cannon.

There is no iron in the country, and none is ever employed in the erection of saklis or of towers. The absence of that metal, and the want of long trees, render it impossible to construct bridges on any other plan.

If rocks, through the industry of the Lesghians, have been rendered fertile, it must be expected that the plains and the valleys are cultivated with extraordinary care. In fact, land is there excessively valued, and the division of property goes much beyond the system which alarms the economists of France and Switzerland. There are owners of ground the size of only two or three fathoms. Nay, the landed property of some men is said to be hardly so large as a cloak! Hence it is reported that a mountaineer was one day unable to discover his field, having covered it with his bourka, which effectually concealed it.

Vestiges of Christianity are not found at all in Daghestan, as they are in the other parts of the Caucasus. With regard to the Avarians, they are but indifferent Mussulmans. Divine service is performed among them in the Arabic language, which is not even understood by the Mullahs themselves.

The religion of the Lesghians has undergone a complete

metamorphosis since the domination of Khasi-Moullah. The fundamental principle of their religion now is to love independence, and above all to hate the Russians.

The inferior classes are especially taught the precepts of the Koran, for the Murids are naturally inclined to observe them, as they are gifted with ecstacy and enthusiasm, through which they are freed from worldly pre-occupations, and are placed in direct contact with the Deity. The Naibs or governors of provinces are possessed of that faculty to a higher degree; yet to the second prophet alone Allah reveals himself.

That faith has originated in Suphism, which, from Arabia, has penetrated through Persia to Daghestan. It is less a religious than a moral, and in some measure a political code. That philosophical system holds materialism in contempt, but it is not over favourable to spiritualism. In fact, according to Suphi, the founder of the doctrine, happiness does not proceed from the mind. That truth might be usefully taught in our modern societies, where intellectual pursuits produce so much uneasiness.

Retaliation is, in Daghestan, carried probably to a greater extent than in any other part of the Caucasus. Even Corsican *vendetta* falls short of Circassian vengeance. Certain families in Daghestan have, from time almost immemorial, been engaged in a deadly struggle for mutual destruction. An offence or treason is visited with vengeance, and that retaliation, which is punished in its turn, superinduces a series of cruelties perpetrated successively by both parties.

The Russian government has as yet done nothing to repress that destructive propensity; on the contrary, it has turned it to its own advantage; for those who are offended

apply to it for the destruction of their enemies. A Russian captain, who commanded the district Welikent, on the road from Derbend to Kisliar, lent, in 1836, his residence to the princes of the family of Kaitach, for their mutual slaughter. The vestiges of the fight are still shown in a small room where it took place, and where thirteen persons were murdered. Elder-Bey, it is said, had repudiated a woman, and her brothers swore to avenge the deed. Moreover, Cetz-Bey, of Kaitach, had been exiled to Siberia, through the accusations of an uncle of his, who had been killed by his brother; so that it was retaliation or thirst for vengeance that led to one of the most extraordinary massacres on record.

However, money or cattle is accepted as compensation on many occasions. Sometimes, in order to restore peace between two families, children are transferred, in order to equalise the number of victims on both sides, and those children are wantonly and unmercifully murdered.

Shamyl has done everything in his power to uproot and render execrable that law of blood which ravages the ranks of his warriors.

CHAPTER XIV.

RUSSIAN ARMENIA.

The different Names of the Armenians—Their Origin—Conquest of Cyrus — Introduction of Christianity—Schism—Extinction of the Kings—Domination of the Russians—Sardar Houstein—Emigration—The Patriarch of Echmiadzin—Insurrection at Erivan in 1846—The Armenian Language—Ararat—Lakes—Climate.

THE Armen of the Greeks are issued from Aram, one of the most ancient kings of Armenia. The Armenians themselves call their country Haisadan; that is, the country of the Haikhs, after the name of Haig, their first king, who came from Babylon about twenty-two centuries before the Christian era.

The Georgians give to the Armenians the name of Somekhi, on account of the province of Somketh, which is situated near their frontiers.

The Armenians are a remote branch of the Indo-German race. They were, towards the beginning of their history, conquered by the Assyrians, under the following circumstances:—Semiramis, unable to win the love of King Ara, who was remarkable for his wonderful beauty, declared war against him. That monarch was killed in

the battle by his own son, and the Assyrian queen, having become mistress of Armenia, founded the tower of Van.*

With the conquest of Assyria, Cyrus brought Armenia under the domination of the Persians. The Armenians, who followed the Chaldean religion, under the Assyrians, adopted the Persian worship, through the propaganda of the magi; and fire-worship still holds in Armenia a more powerful sway than in any other Christian country.

It is reported that a Chinese colony, led by Prince Mamkon, a Chinese fugitive, settled in Armenia. The Jews came also there in considerable numbers, and through them several Sabeian customs were introduced into the Armenian rites. With Mithridates, and especially with the Romans, the paganism of the Greeks penetrated into Armenia, where Anatid or Anaitir, that is, Venus or Diana, became the object of great veneration.

St. Bartholomew, the apostle, is reported to have first preached Christianity in Armenia; but it was Gregory, the *illuminer*, who succeeded in introducing it there, in the third century. Converted Tiridates Bin-Khosrau.

The Armenians preserved the orthodox faith till the year 596, when, under the patriarch, Abraham I., and at the council of Tovin, they separated themselves from the Greeks, condemned the council of Chalcedony, and pronounced in favour of one single nature in Christ. The schismatics were henceforth called Gregorians, and had four patriarchs, whose head, with the title of Catholicos, resided, and still resides, in the convent of Echmiadzin, which now belongs to Russia. Many Armenians remained and are still Roman Catholics, acknowledging the pope as the head of their church.

* Moses of Khorey and Diodorus of Sicily.

The Arsacides reigned in Armenia for about 580 years; but the family of those princes became extinct with Ardashir, the last of them, and Armenia passed under the Persian domination. The Bayroudites afterwards re-established the Armenian monarchy, but the last of them died in 1308, and Leon, of Lusignan, a brother to the king of Cyprus, was raised to the Armenian throne. The sway of the Lusignan family was not of long duration. The last of those princes was expelled from his throne by the Persians, and died in Paris in 1397.*

Armenia, after having been invaded by the Persians, the Turks, the Arabs, and ravaged by the Tartars, under Timour, remained finally the prey of the Persians and the Turks, who divided the country among themselves.

But, in 1827, Paskiewitch took Erivan, and Persia yielded to Russia the province of that name, as well as the territory of Akhitchirvan.

There was at Erivan a viceroy, Houssein Sardar, whose fate shows the instability of human greatness in the east. All his property was confiscated by the Shah of Persia, in order to pay the expenses of the war, and he died in a stable at Ispahan. His widow returned to Erivan, in the expectation of recovering his property, but she was reduced there to such a depth of distress, that a negro, who was her servant, was obliged to beg bread and onions for her. Madame Chopin, the wife of the vice-governor, came to her relief, it is true; but such delays were resorted to in the proceedings through which she was to regain her property, that she died before anything had been settled.

Russia, occupying a part of Armenia, carried on a reli-

* St. Martin's "Armenian Chronicle."

gious propaganda throughout the country, and spared neither gold nor promises to persuade the inhabitants to emigrate. More than 8,000 families, that is about 40,000 individuals, set out from Aderbaidjin for Russia, under the leadership of Lazareff; but the greater number of those 40,000 emigrants died from want and suffering on the road.

The patriarch of Echmiadzin, henceforth appointed by Russia, made it his study, for the purpose of pleasing the government, to alter the Armenian rite, and to render it similar in everything to the Greco-Russian. However, Erivan did not submit quietly to the Russian domination. An attempt at insurrection was tried there, in 1846, but it was soon crushed.

The Armenian language, with its alphabet, composed of thirty-six letters,* bears no likeness whatever to the Turkish, Persian, and Georgian languages. There are two distinct dialects in use among the Armenians, the written language, called *Grapar*, and the vulgar language, known under the name of *Asharapar*. Those two languages differ so widely, that the knowledge of the one does not in the least assist in understanding the other.

Armenia is overrun by several chains of mountains, amongst which we may mention the Chaldean and the dark mountains called Metten. The highest of all is the Ararat, which the Armenians call Masis — mother, or Agridagh.

There is the small, as well as the great Ararat. The latter is 16,200 feet high, according to Parrot, who was the first who ascended it, on the 23rd of September, 1830. He

* A certain Mesrob is said to be the inventor of the Armenian language.

found there no ark, but a plateau, where it might have rested.

The Armenians, who believe that no man will ever have the privilege of treading upon their sanctuary, have always stoutly denied the reality of that ascension, and even succeeded in making the Russian government doubt the fact asserted by the professor of Dorpat. But at length the ascension of M. Autonomoff has proved the truth of Parrot's statement.

The lake of Sevang is 5,000 feet above the level of the sea, sixty-four versts long, and thirty-two broad. A small island, with a current of soft-water, rises above the surface of that lake. The water of the lakes of Vare and Tebriz is salt.

The climate of Russian Armenia is severe, and there is snow during the whole month of April; some has been seen there even in June; while the heat in summer is excessive at Erivan.

As there is a great scarcity of wood, the inhabitants are very ill provided against the intense cold, to mitigate which they build stables in the middle of their dwellings, and burn cow-dung. The following historical fact will give an idea of the cold that prevails there in winter.

In 1808, General Gudowitch, after having in vain blockaded Erivan, was compelled to raise the siege and depart; but on the road he was assailed by such intense cold that he lost half of his army. But we must add that at that time there was not the fine road which now leads from Erivan to Tiflis.

The soil produces excellent liquorice, and the rhubarb is not inferior to that brought from India. Orange and lemon trees grow in those parts more favourably situated.

The common people are well satisfied with Russian domination, but the nobles preferred the Persian government, as under it they enjoyed more licence. Armenia is a country so backward, that it necessarily must derive some advantage from its union with Russia.

The Armenian princes, of whom there are a considerable number,* are not acquainted with the use of the things that are most essential to life, and nothing can be more repulsive than, for instance, the town of Achetetivan.

* There are in Colchis 3,000 princes. Among the Kalmucks any one who is possessed of a flock of sheep is called prince. With regard to the Russians, all the members of the same family are called by the same title.

CHAPTER XV.

FACTS AND FICTIONS.

Prisoners—Taganof—Cossack Ivan—A Kourinski Soldier—The Prisoner of the Caucasus—by the Count X. de Maistre—by the author—by Poushkine — Brigands — Abdoulah-Bey — The grateful Mullah — Lermontof — Ismael-Bey.

THE situation of the Russians, detained as prisoners by the Circassians, being one so very affecting to every sensible mind, could not but forcibly attract the attention of literary men, and it is really of a nature fully to repay the attention of the reader. Truth is so truly interesting here, that invention loses its charms, and the collection of facts becomes a most interesting study.

Count Patocki, in his travels, speaks of M. Taganof, a Russian officer, who was made a prisoner by the Tchetchenians when on a journey to meet his father. Being of the family of the Dimers, of Nogai Krasnai, he was treated better than others, and his knowledge of the Tartar language contributed much to allay his misfortunes. Women especially interested themselves much in his fate, and he was often admitted into their company, when his chains were taken off. After six months detention he was ex-

changed for a Circassian prisoner, and thus obtained his liberty.

Taitbout de Marigny saw at Anapa a Cossack, Ivan, who was taken prisoner in an incursion made by the Circassians on the Kouba, against a colony of Russians, of which he had been one. He remained a long time with a Circassian prince, who made him work at the ground, and wished that he should marry a Circassian. As he, however, declined this offer (a strange refusal on the part of a Cossack), he was shut up with his fair bride, and had to marry her at any rate. To avenge the bad treatment of his master, he shut him up in his own house, set fire to it, and fled with his wife to a mountain, whence he looked with delight at the inroads of the fire he had kindled. He then went to another prince, an enemy of his late master, and took him for a Koniak. This master treated him well, from gratitude for having rid him of his enemy. Sold and resold an immense number of times, Ivan at length reached Constantinople, and thence came to Anapa with a Turkish darha.

A soldier of the regiment of Kour was a prisoner of the Lesghians, and was only released by his regiment, which constituted a portion of the expedition of 1837. He used to tell that, in the same aoul, there was a deserter, who had embraced Moslemism, but who, whenever he saw him, asked for the cross, which the Russians wear on their breast, which he kissed, regretting that he had changed his creed.

But the most interesting recital is that of Count Xavier de Maistre, who relates, in his usual charming style, what had been communicated to him by a Russian officer.*

* "Lettres sur le Caucasus," published in 1812, contain the same tale, but written less partially.

Major Kascombo, of Grecian origin, in proceeding to the port of Lars, to take the command, was accompanied only by about fifty Cossacks. The Tchetchenians having been informed of this rash proceeding by their spies, determined to make him repent it, and attacked him with greatly superior numbers. Half the Cossacks were killed, and the others, making a bulwark of their dead horses, resolved to sell their lives dearly, when a Tchetchenian, who knew the Russian language, or a Russian deserter, cried out, "We do not intend any ill to you; deliver to us your major, and go in peace." The major, on hearing this, advanced, of his own accord, and surrendered, not wishing to prolong the effusion of blood. Hardly had he done so, when a Russian corps appeared to support him, but the Circassians hastened to escape with their prisoner. The soldier who served as a domestic to the major, Ivan Smirnoff, not wishing to separate his lot from that of his master, went to meet him among the Circassians, where he succeeded in rescuing him from captivity. The two prisoners were sent to a very distant aoul, and confided to the guard of Ibrahim, an old Tchetchen, who had lost two sons in the battles against the Russians, and who delighted in having found an occasion to avenge his misfortunes by ill-using the prisoners. The Tchetchenians demanded 10,000 Russian roubles for the ransom of the major, who wrote several letters on the subject, but it seems that the Russian government then followed the policy of not ransoming their prisoners, in order that the Circassians might not be tempted to make them. Ivan endeavoured to allay the heaviness of his chains, by teaching his master how to make Russian viands and drinks. The major amused himself by singing to the guitar, and the Tchetchenians, who take great delight in

Russian songs, asked him often for a repetition. Ivan danced *the Cossack*, and thus still further succeeded in pleasing his captors. When, in fine, the iman of the aoul stated to Ivan that, if he changed his religion, they would not keep him in irons, this faithful servant underwent circumcision for the sake of having his hands free for the deliverance of his master. To remove any doubt of his sincerity, he accompanied the Tchetchenians in one of their expeditions beyond the Terek. The Circassians were repulsed, and as Ivan wore his cap as a policeman, and his military surtout, he served as a target for the balls of the Cossacks, which, however, luckily only injured his clothes. At the passage of the river he saved the life of a Tchetchenian, who swore to Ivan eternal amity, and whose sisters soon informed him that a plot was laid for his life, as he was feared and mistrusted.

The Circassians went on a new expedition, and Ivan made an oath either to die or save himself that very night. As he was not allowed to speak to the major, they communicated with each other by singing. That night there was much music, as they had a great deal to say to each other. At length Ivan knocked Ibrahim into the fire, near to which he was sitting, so fiercely, that he never rose again. His wife, who came running at the smell of Ibrahim's beard burning in the fire-place, Ivan also killed, with her child, who might have betrayed them by his cries. The key of the chains of the major was not to be found in Ibrahim's pockets, so they had to escape as well as they could. Ivan assisted and finally carried his chief until reaching a hut, where they found some refreshment. Having recovered his composure, he succeeded in liberating the major of his irons. They had followed a road in a

contrary direction to that it was supposed the Circassians would follow in their pursuit. They had reached the height of the mountains. They perceived already the plains occupied by the Russian armies, but Kascombo, exhausted by extreme fatigue, could not proceed further Ivan, therefore, proceeded alone to an aoul, subject to the Russians, where, selecting an isolated hut, he promised the owner 100 silver roubles if he would serve the major; but they would not let him go without an escort, and at the sight of the soldiers the kormak of the major threatened to kill him if the Russians proceeded one step further. Ivan explained the mistake, and the Circassian demanded that he should place the money at the door. He seized it and fled, leaving Kascombo in the hands of his liberator. Thus concluded a slavery of eighteen months, during which the simple soldier played the real part of the chief. When the major arrived at the Russian fort, he resumed his epaulettes and married, while the soldier was made a petty officer, in which position he remains, thanks to the Russian law, which retains even men of talent in the grade in which they were born, and affords the noble alone the privilege to serve his country with all his inborn faculties.

We could not, after so touching a tale, mention our own "Prisoner of the Caucasus,"* considered especially under the point of one of St. Petersburg society. But we cannot speak with sufficient praise of the poem of Poushkine, who portrays, with perfect art, the habits and customs of the Circassians.

"What do you think of, Cossack? Don't thou recollect the great battles, the bivouac in the midst of a noisy

* "Russian Sketches," Book ii.

encampment, the cries of victory of the regiment? Illusive dream! Farewell to the free *Stanitzas*, the paternal roof, the quietly running Don, and the rosy girls! The hidden enemy approaches the banks of the river. The arrows fly from his quiver: it flies, and the bleeding Cossack rolls down from the hill!"

Love, holy love, has just broken the chains of the prisoner of Poushkine. It is because, at that time, there existed yet love in the heart of the Tchetchenian towards the Russians, but now there is only hatred. Next to the condition of slavery, that of the brigand may most attract public attention, because, if it has dissapeared even from our tales and romances, it yet exists in the Caucasus, and the princes even do not scruple to exercise it publicly. The Russians could never conciliate Abdoulah-Beg, the son of the Kadi of Tabassaran; and it was another prince of Daghestan, Mohammed-Khan, who endeavoured to acquire the good graces of the Russians, and recover the principality of Utemey, which his father had lost by breaking the allegiance which he had sworn to the Russian general Radaboff. He demanded and obtained powder from the Russians, with which he undermined and blew up the house of the brigand, containing his family and guests. Government rewarded him by allowing him the revenue of several aouls, and by giving medals to his companions. Even later they received some money, although some regret was expressed at the innocent having perished with the guilty!

All is not shade in the Circassian character; it possesses its fair traits. Roniter Wagner has known, at Tekaherinodar, a German physician, attached to the military hospital, who had been twice degraded to be a soldier, for

being concerned in a duel. The Circassians asked often for his aid, but they pay rather in provisions than in money. After a desperate battle the soldier-physician found amongst the dead an old Circassian, who showed signs of life. He had him conveyed to his house, and by the care of him and his wife the wounded man recovered. He was a Mullah, and made his escape as soon as he could march. Sometime afterwards a child came to seek the doctor, to visit a sick person. The physician soon perceived that it was the Mullah, whom he had saved; nevertheless he kept him in his house, and treated him with kindness and rewards. It was at this time that the Tcherkesses made an excursion towards the stanitza where the doctor lived. The expedition succeeded perfectly, and all the inhabitants of the Cossack village, who had not been killed, were made prisoners. The doctor would assuredly have shared the same fate but for the assistance of the Mullah, who saved him by some stratagem. He appeared to consider himself thus acquitted towards the German, who never heard of him again, although he took some pains to renew his acquaintance.

The Caucasus has found a poet in Lenmantoff, exiled to that country for having sung the death of Poushkine, killed in a duel at St. Petersburg, he himself perishing by the same death, in a single combat. The reader will, no doubt, be well inclined to hear some of his Circassian lyric strains.

ISMAEL-BEY.

"This is really a nature uncomprehended, and which does not even understand itself. A mind in travail and

in strife, Providence, at the same time, dispersing and provoking it; who plays with the heart of woman, and with the heads of the enemy like reeds."

The nature of the poet has depicted itself in this impetuous character; but the Russian censorship has often arrested the flight of his pen; otherwise he would have depicted the injustice and cruelty of this war, where the Russian bayonets respect neither the child in its cradle, nor the old man at his hearth; where blood mixes with fire—death with conflagration. How many aouls devastated, rebuilt, and again destroyed! However this may be, Lermontoff had the tale which follows, from an old inhabitant of the mountains:—

"Before the dews of morning had left the ground, a Tcherkess cavalier followed on horseback the narrow path which leads near Bechtan, towards the Elbrous. He had passed that mountain, and soon came in sight of the Schattgora.* His charger foamed with fatigue, and the sun shone on a fine but wild country. The horseman perceived a light, towards which he hastened, and knocked at the door of a little hut. The head of the family, the father of three sons, who followed the profession of brigands, opened the door; but he gave his hand to the stranger, who could henceforth count on his hospitality. A maiden appears, who seems to delight heaven and earth. Ismael becomes confused; the eyes of the Peri draw sparks from his heart, which had been hardened by sufferings. But he triumphs over this sentiment, and when, at his departure, Sara fetches his charger, which she had well attended and caressed, the heart of Ismael beats. Still he mounts his

* The glacier of Elbrouss.

horse, and is about to start, when Sara says to him,—'Where art thou going to? To judge from thy long beard, thou art a stranger, perhaps an exile; here we are, distant from every danger; remain with us.' 'Do not think me insensible, Sara, but the hand which has shed blood is not worthy to press thine. My heart has emptied itself in hatred, and lips which curse are not deserving to press those rosy lips of thine. I am the brother of Yoslam-Bey!' He had hardly spoke thus when the footsteps of his horse fell on the ears of Sara, lost in surprise.

"To detect a brother is horrible, but what does not ambition produce in the heart of man, and, still more, its detestable companion—hatred. Yoslam-Bey was envious of Ismael. He ruled alone over his subjects. The return of Ismael had reduced his power. In a council of war, Yoslam-Bey prepared to surprise the enemy, but Ismael answered, that he did not fight by night, but in the broad day, and his partizans detest his brother and follow him. At the head of his friends Ismael performed deeds which make the mountains 'of a thousand picks,'* resound with the fame of his valour. One day he met a strange warrior, who said that he was searching for Ismael-Bey, for the purpose of killing him, as he had imposed upon the faith of a young maiden. The prince led him towards a rock. 'He whom you seek,' he exclaimed, 'is sufficiently punished by destiny. Pray for him—he suffers; but, if you want to kill him, he is before thee.' So much greatness of mind overpowered the warrior; the *lex talionis* was silenced within his breast, and he left Ismael without having put his hand to his cutlass.

* It is thus that the eastern nations of all times have appellated the chains of the Caucasus mountains.

"Another warrior, however, followed, not to combat with him, but to fight by his side. He did not know him, but loved him as his brother. His name was Selim, and his courage manly. By the chances of war, the gallant followers of Ismael were decimated; the forest of Russian bayoneteers broke into the forests of the Caucasus, into the nearly impenetrable mountains and the aouls. Ismael struggled vigorously; his sword wrought wonders; but a friendly hand turned the bridle of his horse, and they fled before superior numbers. Selim was mortally wounded, and Ismael, in trying to alleviate his suffering, discovered that his friend was a woman,—Sara, who had followed him in battle, and had so bravely fought at his side. A kiss seals their love—the first and the last—the kiss of avowal, and of farewell. Ismael revives with the expiring sigh of Sara.

"What remains for him to be done on this earth, but to die by the hand of a brother, to be cowardly murdered behind a rock, Yoslam-Bey is to expiate cruelly the inconstancy of love; and to close, gloomily, a life of glorious strife. What a legitimate wrath could not accomplish, hatred effected at last, and Yoslam-Bey fires his pistol at his brother."

HADCHI-ABNEK.

"Auol-Dchemet is great and rich. He does not pay tribute. The battle field is his mosque. Steel and courage are his ramparts. His free sons, tried in more than one hot battle, are known throughout the Caucasus. The ball from their hands never misses its aim. A Russian heart and terror march before them in battle.

"The day inclines towards its end, the rocks exhale a hot vapour, everything sinks to rest, and there is no life but in the aoul. On an open place, at the foot of a mountain, from which escapes a torrent, men placed closely in a circle, according to the custom of the land, listen attentively. How will the council decide? Is a new stroke in contemplation? Are the herds of the enemy to be plundered? Is the Russian army expected? Is an invasion prepared? Pity and sorry are deeply engraved on the features of all the Cusdines. An old man, in a strange costume, a Legshian, bending under the weight of years, is seated in the centre of the circle. The words uttered by him are hasty, and his black eye becomes, at times, animated and lustrous.

"'God,' said he, 'had given me, in my old days, three sons and three daughters. The storm has deprived the tree of its branches. Struck by a terrible misfortune, I am to-day altogether lonely in my grief, like a naked tree in the plain. Oh! unhappy are my old days. My beard is whiter than the glaciers, but often even under the cover of cold snow murmurs the sound of a warm heart. Help me, Chevalier de Dchemet—lend me the assistance of your heroism. Which of you know Bey-Boulat? Who will return me my daughters? My other daughters are also slaves, for I know not where they are gone. To the father remains, therefore, but one child. The sons have been slain in battle, two have remained in foreign lands, and I have seen the youngest die too soon the death of a hero. When he fell, his eye beamed as if he saw, in a lustrous rainbow, the *houris* of Danarline smiling at him. I retired then to solitude, taking my last child with me. She grew up under a faithful hand, and all I had was

centered in her. Besides her nothing was left to me but my armour and my gun. I had been driven from my 'homely hearth, my goods were taken, and I myself found in a gap of the mountains a shelter against the enemy. I soon learned to bear misery—freedom I had known for a long time—when fate took away from me, in my old age, her who alone had embellished my life.

"'One night, when I was plunged in a deep slumber, my angel watched at my side, wafting coolness over me with a green branch. I awoke suddenly. I heard myself called by name—a subdued and tremulous voice sounded in my ears, like the sound of horses whose steps begin to fade in the distance. Where is my child? O, God! she 'is lost. A horseman flies with furious haste, and has carried her off. I discharge my musket, the ball does not reach its object, and now see me here, my heart broken, impatient to avenge the outrage, and prayers and maledictions are alike vain. Like a snake trampled upon by the hoof of the horse, I wander, old and suffering, through the mountains, I can find no rest by either day or night, since this terrible event. Help me, Chevalier of Dchemet; lend me your heroic assistance. Which of you know the Prince Bey Boulat, who will return me my daughter."

"'I,' shouted a warrior. He places his hand on his large dagger, and all become silent, and look at the hero, astonished. 'I know him, and I shall aid thee! Never, in his life, has Hadshi mounted his steed in vain. Wait for me two nights; but if I do not come then, wait no 'more to hear of me; thou mayest then return home, and pray the prophet for thy soul!'

"The day breaks in the mountains, giants of granite look afar amongst the mist, and the white summits rise

towards the blue vault of the heaven. The cold breath of the morning breathes from the precipice, and the clouds, like white and red sails, rise towards the summits of the mountains. A Circassian, on horseback, rides cautiously along the precipice. His charger, once so fierce, marches slowly, with measured steps. The dew yet covers rock and dale; the sun shines on the horseman, who soon slackens the bridle, plays with his whip, and begins to make the air resound with the song of ancient times, which the rocks re-echo. On a side-way he sees the traces of carts, and under his feet shines an aoul, in the brightness of the morning sun. Herds browse; the noise of the village rises in the distance. He recognises, distinctly, the residence of Boulat-Bey, situate on the right of a rocky range. At the door of the house is seated the lovely young Lesghian maiden, looking towards the road and the plain. What is it that moistens her burning cheek? O, speak, fair star of the south, for whom glows thy heart full of warmth? Dost thou see thy brothers return—awaitest thou a distant friend? She inclines her head, as if tired of waiting; her breast heaves, as if moved by some sweet passion. Her cheek reddens, the southern blood has risen there. A magical enchantment moves on her lips; everything in her burns with a tremulous ardour. Her hands tremble as if they wanted to seize some one. Suddenly she rises, and becomes agitated. The step of a horse makes the rocks resound; the dust rises; a horseman draws near. 'It is him, no doubt,' exclaims she, full of joy.

"Hope easily sharpens our eyes, and changes our sight. The horseman approaches. O, fatality! It is a stranger; she does not know him. He comes to find an asylum under her roof. But he does not come near; he does not

quit his saddle. His look wanders about in fear. Who can inspire him with fear?

"'Why dost thou hesitate,' says Leila? 'dismount from thy horse; repose thyself; a guest sent by accident is a gift of God. If thou be poor, I am rich. I will fetch thee honey and koumeis. I will that thou should bless the home of Boulat-Bey.'

"'Leila, may God protect thee. Thou receivest thy host so well, that he must bring thee a blessing. Thy father sends thee his.'

"'My father! Oh! I have been separated so long from him. Has he not forgotten his absent daughter? Where does he stay? His daughter knows where he is—he lives as he lived before. Is he happy? Is he contented? Speak.'

"'Who buries himself alive—who has borne such strokes of fate—who has been driven from his home, and has not where to put his head in security; to whom nothing is left—can he be contented? But thou,—art thou happy?'

"'Yes, I am happy. I want nothing.'

"'O! misfortune!'

"'What sayest thou?'

"'Nothing.'

"The stranger becomes silent, leaning his head on the table, and does not touch any of the meal laid before him. Serenity has left his forehead, which becomes covered with furrows. Are they the effect of time or of sorrow?

"Leila will console her guest; she takes her tambourine, she sings and dances; her eyes shine like stars, as she moves about, stoops, and rises. His breast moves, a voluptuous delirium runs through his frame. She

moves before her guest like a butterfly before a ray of the sun. At one time she throws her instrument in the air, seizes it again, and makes it turn and jump by her white fingers; then again she puts it above her head, and follows it with her eyes, which she then fixes on the stranger, as to say, 'Leave off thy sorrow, and believe me that happiness and misfortune are but dreams on this earth.'

"Leila,' says Hadchi-Abnek, 'cease to dance and to sing; arrest the impetuous feelings which enliven thee. How, does sorrow never await on thee? Does the image of death never turn thy thoughts from this joyful life?'

"'Why should I think of the cold grave, as I am happy on this earth.'

"'Dost thou never feel thyself attracted towards thy fatherland—the misty land—towards the Daghestan, with the blue sky?'

"'I love these mountains, these clouds, and these glaciers. The world is fair everywhere, not only where we were born. The heart finds its fatherland where happiness and love are; it bears gladly the bonds that attach it to love, and forgets itself easily in whatever it loves; like the bird it flies away, and makes its nest wherever it likes, free in the beauteous world of God.'

"'It is but those who preserve a faithful recollection of past happiness who will find a sweet consolation in their hearts, when that happiness has passed away. Images pass and change in us; one effaces the traces of the other; one remembrance pursues the other; love becomes pain, and enjoyment a crime. That which pleases us flies from us; the chains which caressed us melt away, and what we have repulsed comes back. Leila! Leila! for all the world I would not have this false happiness * * * What is it—thou appearest pale!'

"'Hear me one moment, Leila. I will soon conclude. I had a brother; he is dead; so fate willed it, not like a hero, in open battle. He was secretly murdered by the criminal arm of thy husband. Like a wild beast he expired miserably through the assassin's ball, without knowing who was his foe. But in death he imposed upon me the debt of vengeance. After many years I have found his enemy. My dagger was drawn upon him. But what then is death, thought I, after the pains I have suffered? Should one single last moment avenge the sufferings I have endured? No, there are more cruel evils than that. He must have some one he loves. I shall find and strike him dead! My wish is at last accomplished; the awful hour has come, and my vengeance is unfailing. Seest thou the setting sun? It is time, I see my brother, and his glance of death—it is time, I hear his voice. When I saw thee to-day, for the first time, playing and dancing, thy lot excited my pity, and I felt a great pain; but I have overcome this feeling. It is vengeance alone which animated all my thoughts. O, Allah! I shall keep my oath.'

"She became pale as snow; all her limbs trembled; she fell at his feet; she wept and embraced his knees, saying, 'O! do not look at me with that gloomy aud menacing eye, which quite appals me. Thy words pervade my blood like cool poison. Do not joke. Dost thou think of assassination? Your look is cool—cruelly cool. Oh, heavens! turn away his arm. Does the tears of innocence not move thee. Tell me, how do they weep in thy country to excite pity? Thou wilt kill me, and I shall die—so young, so happy. Oh, pray thee, stop! Have pity! Hast thou never been so happy in thy life as to love, and has thy heart never been moved? No, no.'

"His mouth remains silent; prayers and tears do not touch him. 'Let me yet live one hour—one single moment!'

"The blade has flashed, and with one stroke he has severed the head from the body. Hadchi wipes it with the long hair of his bourka; then he jumps on his horse, with his bleeding and inanimate victim. A miraculous fright scares the animal; he recoils at the burden imposed upon him, gnashes his teeth, champs the bit, his mane rises, he beats the ground with his hoof, and will not start. Neither word nor bridle can quiet him. At last he turns, and, like an arrow, flies towards the mountains.

"The Aurora of the evening begins to be pale, soon it will recede to obscurity; gloomy clouds menace all around to dispel the last ray of light. They forbode a storm. The torrent grumbles, and rolls on at the foot of the rocks. Lonely horseman, spur thy steed, and envelop thyself in thy bourka. Why does thy foot tremble in the stirrup? Move thy whip, draw thy bridle closer! No spirit of the mountains—no savage beast threatens thee, nor follows thee; thou canst yet pray; nothing disturbs thee; pray, then!

"Courage, my horse! Whence comes thy trouble? Here, shines the mail of a serpent; there, rocks undermined by the torrent hang in the air. How often have I, in the heat of battle, tainted thy mane with blood; how often, in my days of misfortune, hast thou saved me in the uproar of the fight, or in the desert, and hast safely brought me home? Why draggest thou me to-day like a heavy burden? Go on, then, my good animal; soon shall we repose ourselves at home. I shall then cover thy harness with more Russian silver, and shall let

thee browse with the herds, without thy saddle. Only to-day thou must trot swiftly. Hardly hast thou carried me a few hours, and thou art already covered all over with foam, and respiring so heavily under me? What is it that impedes thy course? Darkness retires, the moon appears, and projects silvery rays through the clouds; she makes us perceive the land where our aoul reposes in security. See! the fires of the shepherds shine in the meadow like stars. It seems to me that I distinguish in the distance the braying of the herds of Dchemet; the horses hurry to come and meet us, as if they felt from a distance that we bring misfortunes along with us.

"Around Dchemet, the night had wrapped everything in a deep slumber. Only a lonely old man sits watching, near the road, on a white stone, and seems as motionless as a monument. He gazes silently, but full of expectation, on the road which leads from the rocky valley, and a deep sorrow shines in the steel of his fixed eyes.

"Who is the horseman who descends at the foot of the rocks with so much precaution? His fatigued steed bows his neck with its long mane. He has taken off his bourka, he holds it in his hand, and carries in it something carefully wrapped up, and the old man says to himself, 'Perhaps he has concealed in the garment some presents from my beloved daughter.'

"Already the horseman has approached the old man. He stops his horse, he opens the folds of the bourka with his trembling left hand, and the bleeding head escapes and falls in the tufty grass. Good heavens, the old man recognises the head of his own child. Almost deprived of his senses, he presses the beloved head to his mouth; her

features, cool and bleeding, receive the last utterings of sorrow, and a kiss escapes with his life. Misfortunes had sorely tried that unhappy heart. He broke like a thread of decayed flax, and on his forehead, motionless like lead, lay heavily engraven wrinkles. The soul had fled so swiftly from him, that expectation, which had animated him, remained impressed on his moribund features.

"Hadchi-Abnek remained for a moment motionless, then, with the utmost speed of his horse, he fled precipitately to the mountains.

* * * * * *

"About a year had elapsed, when, amongst brambles and rocks, two corpses were found in a cavern, nearly half decayed; but crime was yet visible on their faces, turned towards each other. They were extended on the ground, as if they had been fighting. It appeared to the pilgrim, who found and subsequently buried their corpses in the mountains, what might have been an illusion, that life was yet active in them, that their threatening mouths were opening, and that their eyes became enlivened, as for some savage and ferocious deed.

"The vestments of both were rich. The one was Prince Boulat-Bey. No one could recognise the other."

THE END.

00038267

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 02 July, 2018